

Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana

**Indigenous Village Artist
Story Teller and Ahi Kaa**



A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree

of Master of Arts in Art History

by Anna Klekottka

University of Canterbury

2009

To Earth.

To all the women in my ancestral lines.

To my children Inti, David and Hannah Jüermann.

May you tread gently on this planet and enjoy every minute
of the time you are given to spend here.

Table of Contents

Pepeha.....	ii
German Song.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
List of Illustrations.....	v-ix
Abstract.....	x
Foreword.....	xi-xxi
Introduction.....	xxii-xlv
Chapter One.....	1-34
Chapter Two.....	35-66
Chapter Three.....	67-104
Conclusion.....	105-121
German Song.....	122

Appendices

Whakapapa.....	123-124
Biographical Notes/Important Exhibitions	124-127
Glossary.....	128-131
References Cited.....	132-136

Ko te mihi tuatahi ki te runga rawa

Nana nei nga mea katoa.

Ko te mihi tuarua ki a Ranginui e tu ake nei,

Ki a Papatuanuku e takoto nei, tena korua.

Ka huri toku mihi ki te hunga mate,

haere, haere, haere atu ra, a,

ki a tatau te hunga ora,

tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa

Ko Tiamana, Germany, te iwi.

Ko Westfalia te hapu.

Ko Herne te taone.

Ko Ruhr te awa.

Ko Kurt raua ko Lilli Jüermann oku matua.

Ko Wolfgang taku teina.

Ko Anna Klekottka toku ingoa.

No reira, nga mihi ra.

Wie ist doch die Erde so schön, so schön,

das wissen die Vögelein.

Sie heben ihr leichtes Gefieder,

und singen so fröhliche Lieder

in den blauen Himmel hinein.

Und Sänger und Maler, die wissen es,

und es wissen's noch andere Leut'.

Und wer es nicht malt, der singt es,

und wer es nicht singt, dem klingt es

aus dem Herzen, vor lauter Freud.

German song (unknown origin)

Acknowledgements

The research for this thesis was carried out over a period of three years during which I had many meetings and discussions with Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana. Thank you, Ngaromoana, for your time, your support, your trust and your kindness.

I express my gratitude to my supervisor Karen Stevenson, who, dedicated to flow, structure and concise wording, teased out language I never thought I could articulate and pushed me further than I imagined I could go. Thank you so very much for sharing your expertise and for your commitment. You worked as hard as I did, when guiding me through the various, sometimes difficult stages of this work. You also managed to keep my enthusiasm kindled and you were always there, when I needed your feedback.

I also extend my heartfelt thanks to Robert Jahnke, who ensured that Te Ao Maori was correctly represented and whose comments enhanced this thesis. Thank you, Bob.

Last, but not least, thank you to Liz Bond and Ian Lochhead, who dealt swiftly and in an un-bureaucratic manner when a difficult matter needed to be resolved.

List of Illustrations

Title Page *Mahitian Queen I*, photograph by author

Introduction

- Figure In.1 *Map of Area*, courtesy of Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana
- Figure In.2 photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure In.3 photograph by author
- Figure In.4 *Mahitian Queen I*, photograph by author
- Figure In.5 *Whaea*, photograph by author
- Figure In.6 *Rubbish Tree*, photograph by author
- Figure In.7 from *Grasskirt Series*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure In.8 Ngaromoana, photograph by author

Chapter One

- Figure 1.1 *Opoutama Beach Front*, photograph, origin unknown, courtesy of Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana
- Figure 1.2 *Rongomaiwahine Flag*, photograph from Mitchell, 1972: 80.
- Figure 1.3 *Flag it*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.4 *Rongomaiwahine Lintel*, (detail) Takitimu Marae, Wairoa, photograph by author
- Figure 1.5 *Ruawharo*, carving at Takitimu Marae, Wairoa, photograph by author
- Figure 1.6 *Ruawharo's Seven Pet Whales*, photograph by author

- Figure 1.7 *Kuri*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.8 *Hare*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.9 *Cloak*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.10 *Poutama*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.11 *Rakahore*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.12 *Niho Taniwha I*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.13 *Niho Taniwha II*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.14 *Poutama Pura Whetu*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.15 *Poutama Waka*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.16 *Poutama Kiwi*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.17 *Poutama*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.18 *Poutama*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figs. 1.19 *Poutama Feng Shui*, photographs courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- 1.23
- Figure 1.24 *Ngaromoana's Studio*, photograph by author
- Figure 1.25 *Veranda of Ruawharo Marae*, detail, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 1.26 *Gifted Sands*, Postcard, courtesy of Desna Whaanga-Schollem

Chapter Two

- Figure 2.1 *Opoutama Beach Front*, photograph by author
- Figure 2.2 *Occupation*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 2.3 *Occupation*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 2.4 *Occupation*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana

- Figure 2.5 *Ahi Kaa*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 2.6 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.7 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.8 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.9 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.10 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.11 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.12 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.13 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.14 from *Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.15 *Poutama Wahi Tapu* series, photograph by author
- Figure 2.16 *Bluebay Sections for Sale*, photograph by author
- Figure 2.17 *Bluebay Sections for Sale*, photograph by author
- Figure 2.18 *Caravan*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 2.19 *Caravan*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 2.20 *Whakapohane*, photograph in *Wairoa Star*, 3-21-2009
- Figure 2.21 *Whakapohane*, photograph in *Wairoa Star*, 3-21-2009

Chapter Three

- Figure 3.1 *Kahungunu*, photograph courtesy of Roseanne Jones
- Figure 3.2 *Wahine Ataahua* series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.3 *Wahine Ataahua* series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.4 *Wahine Ataahua* series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana

- Figure 3.5 *Whare Tangata*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.6 *Hinenuitepo*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.7 *Wahine Ataahua* series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.8 *Wahine Ataahua* series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.9 *Vitruvian Woman*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.10 *Veil Kotiro*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.11 *Veil Puhi*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.12 *Veil Mama*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.13 *Handbag*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.14 *Handbag*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 3.15 *Bucket*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana

Conclusion

- Figure 4.1 *Vikings of the South Seas*, photograph by author
- Figure 4.2 *Upoko*, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 4.3 *Veil*, detail, photograph by author
- Figure 4.4 *Mahitian Queen I*, photograph by author
- Figure 4.5 *Mahitian Queen II*, photograph by author
- Figure 4.6 from *Whaea* series, photograph by author
- Figure 4.7 from *Whaea* series, photograph by author
- Figure 4.8 from *Whaea* series, photograph by author
- Figure 4.9 from *Grasskirt* series, photograph by author
- Figure 4.10 from *Grassskirts* series, photograph by author

- Figure 4.11 from *Grassskirts* series, photograph by author
- Figure 4.12 from Grasskirt series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 4.13 from Grasskirt series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 4.14 from Grasskirt series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana
- Figure 4.15 *Suitcase*, from *Naked and...* series, photograph courtesy of Mahea Tomoana

Abstract

Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana is a painter from the East Coast of the North Island. In more than 30 years she has produced and shown a large body of work, like many other women artists concurrently juggling motherhood and artistic performance. Over approximately the last 10 years, she has formalized her education completing the Advanced Diploma for Maori Visual Arts at Toihoukura in Gisborne as well as a Bachelor of Arts and a Masters of Maori Visual Arts at Massey University.

The artist, who identifies as an *Indigenous Village Artist*, is hardly known outside her local area of Northern Hawkes Bay, and, apart from a short feature in *Mataora*¹, a picture in *Te Ata*², and various catalogue entries, little has been written about her work. This thesis introduces Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana and explores the notion of an indigenous village art. I incorporate feminist and postcolonial discourses into a political and critical engagement with her art, which addresses issues of village and land based cultural identity as well as race and gender. I argue that her work is politically motivated and important in the context of contemporary Maori art. Furthermore, based on a holistic world view, it simultaneously reaches out into the wider, global community. Intertwining local and personal history, her oeuvre is the manifestation of a female path and a female perspective, of identification with her village and beyond.

¹ Sandy Adsett & Cliff Whiting (eds.), *Mataora*, 1996, pp. 134-135,

² Witi Ihimaera & Ngarino Ellis (eds.), *Te Ata, Maori Art from the East Coast*, 2002, unpaginated.

Foreword

If our knowledge is only of ourselves, then our vision is only of ourselves. If Maori are to have a future, or in fact if peoples of the world are to have a future, we must develop an understanding of each other. We must accept each others presence, we must accept that each of us comes from an ancestral depth of cultural evolution, we must accept that we can learn from each other, and we must develop a vision that enables us to survive into a future world. Together.³

Like painter Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana, whose work is at the centre of this thesis, I acknowledge and support the timeliness of Darcy Nicholas' vision of 'Togetherness' as quoted above. Like Ngaromoana⁴, I am a practicing artist, a woman and mother with a strong connection to the land and great concerns about the wellbeing of the planet and her creatures. Unlike Ngaromoana though, I am of German nationality and an immigrant to this country. Having just moved to Gisborne, the occupation of the Opoutama beach, in front of the former Bluebay Camping ground on the Mahia Peninsula, caught my attention. Ngaromoana was involved in this protest. Introduced by a mutual friend, we soon found common ground and stayed in touch. When I eventually asked her if I could write this thesis about her, she immediately consented without reservation.

From a researcher's point of view, the fact that so little is known about Ngaromoana,

³ Darcy Nicholas, Keynote Address at the 8th International Symposium of the Pacific Art Association. *From Tribalism to Internationalism*, 2003.

⁴ Ngaromoana wishes to be identified by her first name, which relates to a single important event in the history of her family. This event is described in Chapter One, page 3.

opens a field of exploration and offers many possibilities for considering this artist.

I asked her how she wished to be positioned and she answered: “I am an indigenous village artist.”⁵ This became the direction of my thesis.

I am acutely aware that as Linda Tuhiwai Smith advises, indigenous peoples want to tell their own stories, write their own versions, in their own ways, for their own purposes,⁶ because “from the vantage point of the colonized⁷ the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism.”⁸ At the same time, I also agree with the Aboriginal scholar Marcia Langton who identifies the expectation of a pre-existing automatic understanding between people of a shared cultural identity as racist. She says in the context of Australian Aboriginality:

There is a naïve belief that Aboriginal people will make ‘better’ representations of us, simply because being Aboriginal gives ‘greater’ understanding. This belief is based on an ancient and universal feature of racism: the assumption of the undifferentiated Other. More specifically, the assumption is that all Aborigines are alike and equally understand each other, without regard to cultural variation.⁹

This argument, of course, broadens Smith’s perspective, thus supporting and shaping my own approach as a non-Maori researcher from the other side of the world writing about a Maori artist.

⁵ Personal communication, April 2006.

⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies, Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 1999, p. 28.

⁷ I interpret the term ‘colonized’ as presented by cultural theorist Homi K. Bhabha’s in his description of post- colonial criticism in that it: ... “bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world order.” Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, 1994, p. 171.

⁸ Smith, 1999, p. 1.

⁹ Marcia Langton quoted in Jo Diamond, *Takarangi: A Spiral Design On A Patchwork Quilt*, 1998, p.1.

Regardless of cultural identity, any attempt to write an academic paper requires, to a large degree, the necessity of judging, constructing, deconstructing, valuing, labeling, positioning, contextualizing, comparing, categorizing, and interpreting. In short, techniques, which have - in a post colonial climate - been identified as highly suspect in themselves. Interpretations can be biased, and, at the same time potentially create a 'subject-object' relationship. Thus I recognize my subjective position as a researcher.

Jo Diamond emphasizes the diversity in the 'subject' position by quoting Trinh T. Minh-ha's critique of a Eurocentric perception of an 'authentic' unchanging self:

The differences made between entities comprehended as absolute presences – hence the notions of *pure origin* and *true self* – are an outgrowth of a dualistic system of thought peculiar to the Occident (the “onto-theology” which characterizes Western metaphysics). They should be distinguished from the differences grasped *both between* and *within* entities, each of these being understood as multiple presence. Not One, not two either. “I” is therefore not a unified subject, a fixed identity, or that solid mass covered with layers of superficialities one has gradually to peel off before one can see its true face. “I” is itself infinite layers (1989:94).¹⁰

I refer once more to Marcia Langton, who again in the context of Australian aboriginality, also establishes that “aboriginality” is only meaningful in terms of intersubjectivity, i.e. when both, the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal are subjects, not objects.¹¹ It is this intersubjectivity that produces cultural meaning. I apply these observations to the interactions between Ngaromoana and myself.

¹⁰ Diamond, 1998, p. 53.

¹¹ Ibid. p. 32.

I situate myself *inside* the experience of being an artist and a woman of the same generation, a mother, who is environmentally aware. However, I am *outside* the experience of a Maori woman. At the same time neither ‘*indigeneity*’¹² nor the concept of ‘*village*’ or ‘*village art*’ are alien to me. I identify as an indigenous German woman with an urban background but rural preferences and a strong connection to the land. While my experiences of ‘culture’ may be totally different from Ngaromoana’s, they also, on many levels, differ completely from those of other German women of similar age. The same is true for my personal psychological disposition, experiences, goals, objectives and beliefs. Again I quote Jo Diamond:

Cultural theorist and film-maker, Trinh T. Minh-ha (1989: 82&95) also offers a feminist perspective of those notions of cultural difference that separate ‘Maori’ from ‘Non-Maori’, ‘East’ from ‘West’ and ‘First World’ from ‘Third World’:

“difference” is essentially “division” in the understanding of many. It is no more than a tool of self-defense and conquest. You and I might as well not walk into this semantic trap which sets us up against each other as expected by a certain ideology of separatism.... Difference as uniqueness or special identity is both limiting and deceiving.¹³

My relationship with Ngaromoana, both as a woman and an artist, has developed into one of friendship and ‘identification’ in a very specific sense, which I believe can complement and support her points of reference, as well as my own.

The process of collating material for this thesis and spending time together provided Ngaromoana with an opportunity of illuminating some aspects of her own heritage.

¹² I discuss this term fully in the Introduction.

¹³ Diamond, 1998, p. 50.

She says:

When I met Anna I was fascinated. For me she was part of the answers to my life's questions about my identity. She was very shy. I was flattered with her interest in my work and her desire to include it in her Thesis. Having a white German woman write about a Maori woman's art in these times of political correctness, of Tino Rangatiratanga: hei aha! When you strip away the influences of cultural fears and scars, the common joys and celebrations appear. We gain glimpses into shared existences, they become special – reminding us of Papa, Mother Earth, who accommodates us all. Through whakapapa there is a shared understanding, a laying of the whariki long before our own births.¹⁴

One of my grandfathers traveled from Waikokopu, Mahia mai Tawhiti, to Europe during WWI, while the other Danish born grandfather traveled from Copenhagen to Aotearoa when he was 12 years old. And so the threads of our encounter have been woven by our mothers and grandmothers and their mothers' mothers to Mother Earth.

For me, having been granted insights into Ngaromoana's art and personal life and gaining greater understanding of aspects of 'things Maori', has enriched my life.

This insight has strengthened my own sense of identity as a German woman living in Aotearoa New Zealand, and specifically of being and belonging as a daughter of the Earth Mother, who is the same here as she is 20,000 kilometres away across her mountains, rivers and seas.

In order to help convey an understanding of my own perspective, I feel it is appropriate to interweave at this point some background information about myself. Therefore, on the following pages, I examine aspects of my own indigeneity as a German woman in terms of their relevance to this thesis.

¹⁴ I elaborate on these terms in the Introduction.

I was born and grew up in the Ruhr Valley in North West Germany, a highly populated, built-up area with coal mines and heavy industries. Historically, my hometown Herne developed alongside a Roman trading route.¹⁵ Nearly 2000 years later, when I was born, it had a population of about 100,000 with probably 10 million people living in the region. My river was an artificial waterway, the Rhein-Herne Kanal, connecting the Ruhr and Rhine. I spent many hours by its banks observing the big boats heavily laden with goods. Low in the water they slowly made their way along the river, while others, traveling swiftly and lightly, were ready to pick up new cargo. The land was flat, the dug-outs around the coal mines were the mountains of my childhood. They were miraculous: covered in grass, with flowers and bushes, birds and toads, bees and butterflies, swampy areas and little lakes with tadpoles, frogs, and even tiny fish. Nature seemed to have simply spread her beautiful carpet over the rough and barren terrain. I spent much of my time exploring her secrets, and I still continue to do so, wherever I am.

Many of our neighbours worked in the mines and related industries. The general climate was one of comradeship, working class and the political left. People were hard working and lived life without frills. My father, Kurt, was employed by the city council. His spare time was divided between supporting the local soccer team and raising pigeons in the attic of the 4 storey building where we lived. The house,

¹⁵ As an interesting aside; the most comprehensive history on German tribes, *Germania*, was written by Tacitus, a Roman historian. Gajus Julius Caesar described the Germans as the most savage of tribes and unfit to be civilized.

wall to wall with others of the same size, comprised 8 flats and we shared it with 7 other families.¹⁶

My mother, Lilli, kept the home fires burning and brought music into our lives. She was an accomplished flute player, as well as the conductor of the city choir and sometimes the orchestra. A specialist in German folk and church music, she also collected music from other cultures. Many evenings and weekends were spent practicing for concerts and ambitious musical events in public spaces, usually involving the greater community and often hundreds of singers. When many years later, as a recent immigrant to this country, I heard the late Hirini Melbourne sing in his beautiful Tuhoe language, I broke into tears. His songs and taonga puoro, the traditional musical instruments, inspired my wish to learn more about ‘things’ Maori.

Iwitanga (tribalism) was something I immediately understood. Although from the outside contemporary Germany may be perceived as a homogenous society, aspects of our tribal history (no matter how far back in time) are still very much alive and expressed as ‘local’ diversity within the individual national states.¹⁷ When I went to university in Munich, I found myself on another planet.¹⁸ Everything was different: the language, customs, food and drink, architecture, particularly the churches,

¹⁶ In the Ruhr Valley, at that time, pigeons were the race horses of the working class. I remember my father lying flat on that high roof on Sundays, waiting for his pigeons to return after their long flight. He would then try and charm them inside quickly, to be able to take their rings and clock their flying times.

¹⁷ In 1871 Otto von Bismarck unified 25 constituent German States to form a German Empire under Prussian leadership. The present Federal Republic of Germany comprises 16 German states or countries (Bundesländer).

¹⁸ The distance between Herne and Munich is roughly 700 kilometers.

including their interior. I perceived my new environment as truly baroque compared to the rather austere Ruhr region.

It took me a while to come to terms with being - not necessarily unkindly - identified as “*Preiss*” meaning “Prussian”, which actually I am not. At that time, the Federal Republic of Germany was made up of 11 individual states, and Prussia was certainly not one of them. I soon learned that from a Bavarian perspective a cultural divide roughly following the flow of the river Main and called “Weisswurst-Äquator”, cut Germany in half.¹⁹ Until then - prior to the Reunification in 1990 and the concurrent collapse of the Soviet system - I had only been aware of an impenetrable vertical, the so called *Iron Curtain*, cutting through Germany and separating the communist from the capitalist countries. In any case, neither axis revealed any of the very diverse specificities the individual German countries were holding within their confines.

Cultural distinctions became even more apparent to me when I lived in a very isolated area in the Bavarian Forest to pursue an apprenticeship in ceramics. This is where the stories lived, of dwarfs and giants, of guardian spirits, dragons and dragon slayers connected with the area. I had not heard any comparable tales in my industrial home town. This is also where traditional arts and crafts were still alive and practiced after ancient patterns. Often family property, these were passed down through the generations, quite like certain Maori weaving and carving patterns or waiata (songs). Here I met tangata whenua, (people of the land, the indigenous

¹⁹ Weisswurst is a veal sausage specific to South Germany, while Äquator means equator.

population) people, who had been there for generations and knew every inch of their environment. Their approach was holistic, *heart, body and soul*. They looked after the land as the land looked after them. No trespassing. It was as simple as that.

Ngaromoana once asked me about mythology which is such an integral part of Maori life. To my great embarrassment I hardly knew anything about German mythology and only vaguely remembered the *Nibelungenlied* and *Siegfried* who killed the dragon and bathed in its blood. I was aware of a connection with Richard Wagner's *Ring Cycle* and his other operas. Wagner's operas are based on German, as well as on Scandinavian mythology, but since they are not popular culture their content does not circulate freely. Furthermore German folk lore, like Wagner and his city of Bayreuth, were appropriated and used by the Nazis for ideological and nationalist purposes. When, after WWII, a rigorous cleansing process was undertaken within German society, everything and everybody pertaining to that era came under scrutiny. If there was any doubt about nationalist affinity or affiliation, access was denied. Consequently at least two generations of post war Germans, including myself, lived without these stories. Within the public school curricula they were only very briefly addressed as part of our cultural heritage.

Mythology has, however, always been taught in the privately run Rudolf Steiner²⁰ schools. Most interestingly, Rangimarie Turuki (Rose) Pere indicates that “the

²⁰ Austrian born Rudolf Steiner, 1861-1925, is the founder of *Anthroposophy*, a science which approaches man from a comprehensive, spiritual perspective and postulates the existence of an objective spiritual world. His theories have been implemented in many fields, such as education, (bio-dynamic) agriculture, social and political science, economics, medicine and art.

German people have their Rudolf Steiner”²¹, and that this is why we can relate to the spiritual dimensions of a holistic approach, such as the education and health model she offers with *Te Wheke*.²² This may be true, but only a very small percentage of the population identifies with Steiner’s *Anthroposophy*. In any case, his approach is very close to my own heart, which is perhaps why I feel quite comfortable in Ngaromoana’s spiritual world.

As far as the physical dimension is concerned, I have now lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for almost two decades; more than half of that time in Golden Bay, some years in Christchurch and the rest on the East Coast of the North Island. Attracted by the sheer beauty of this part of the world, I work as a sculptor and painter. In addition, and here I refer once more to Nicholas, I take great effort to extend my knowledge as well as my vision beyond myself, to learn from others, and “develop a vision that enables us to survive into a future world. Together.”

I have researched for and written this thesis with Ngaromoana’s consent and active support. She herself has been my most important source of information – and inspiration. For ethical reasons she was kept informed throughout the process and proof read various drafts as well as the final version prior to submission.

²¹ Rangimarie Turuki (Rose) Pere, “Finding Meeting Points” in *Consult*, March 2005, pp.10-11.

²² Pere, *Te Wheke, A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom*, 1997.

However, I do wish to point out that this dissertation is entirely from my own perspective.

I extend again my heartfelt thanks to Ngaromoana for sharing her world with me.

Introduction

Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana lives and works both, at Opoutama Village, a small Ngai Tama hapu settlement nestled into the hills of the isthmus at the entrance of Mahia Peninsula, and in Hastings, Hawkes Bay. Her tribal affiliations are Ngati Rongomaiwahine and Ngati Kahungunu.²³

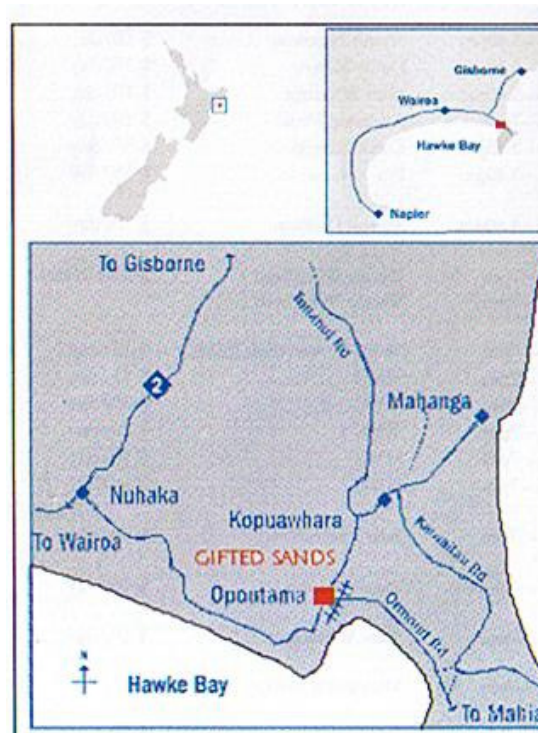


Figure In.1 *Map of Area*²⁴

²³ These ancestors are introduced in Chapter One.

²⁴ *Gifted Sands* is an annual community event Ngaromoana is involved in and will be discussed in Chapter One.

Over the last 30 years she has taken part in many exhibitions, both locally and internationally, and her work can be seen in public spaces, such as the Hastings Library and the Heretaunga Museum in Napier (Fig. In.2). During the last decade she has pursued formal education, completing the Advanced Diploma for Maori Visual Arts at Toi Houkura in Gisborne and a Bachelor of Arts as well as a Masters of Maori Visual Arts from Massey University.



Figure In.2²⁵

²⁵ This photograph shows Ngaromoana (centre) with two of her children and friends in front of her work at the Heretaunga Museum in Hastings in 2002.

Unlike the English writer Virginia Woolf, who proclaimed nationhood as redundant for women, when she declared: “As a woman, I have no country. As a woman, I want no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world”,²⁶ Ngaromoana, first and foremost, identifies with her papa kainga (home village) Opoutama (Fig. In.1). She is going back to her roots. Opoutama *is* her country, in fact she considers it her world. In an era that celebrates globalization and gallery art as the pinnacles of evolutionary and artistic achievement, Ngaromoana situates herself as an indigenous village artist. In doing so, she claims a position which appears to be unique within the landscape of Maori and New Zealand art. This thesis will explore and define her understanding and practice of indigenous village art.

Ancestral lands and papa kainga are, in very general terms, important for most people, and perhaps even more so for Maori or Maori artists, but Ngaromoana’s entire art *revolves around* and *responds to* her experiences of and feelings towards her environment. Her work is not only about painting the object or the subject. For her, the boundaries between her life and art are fluid and immediate, extending from the physical into the psychic and spiritual. She incorporates what she is painting about into the things she does, the way she lives, and vice versa.

The artist sees herself both, in the traditional role of ahi kaa (keeper of the home fires) and that of a contemporary visual story-teller. Her work is personal, prolific, multi layered and meaningful. Centered on her home village Opoutama, it is an

²⁶ Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, 1938, p.197.

expression of her responses to events past and present. Referencing the past, it is her goal to present an intimate view of the place, the culture and herself as they exist today. This, she feels, is particularly important, as the environment is changing very fast and therefore there is a very real threat that records of the past will be lost. Honouring her ancestry and wahi tapu (significant sites), her focus is on mana whenua (status of the land) and mana wahine (status of women).

While defining her sense of self, her heritage and her place as a Maori woman in New Zealand, Ngaromoana's vision and insights rise far beyond the frame of the immediate '*here and now*' or '*time and place*' into the realms of the universal, the eternal and the mythical. *Naked Sands* (2005-2006),²⁷ for instance, was her response to a subdivision on the Opoutama beach front and tells a 'local story', but at the same time, the issues relating to the appropriation of land can easily be identified as 'national' and even 'global'. Some of the concepts explored by Ngaromoana, such as poutama (ascending pathway, stairway) or mauri (life force),²⁸ are specifically Maori and, given the history of Opoutama, even more specifically 'local'. However, the manner in which she conveys these concepts enables the viewer to understand their relevance beyond the confines of culture. Likewise, in her representations of women and female elements, most of us will identify aspects of ourselves and our lives, our pains and joys, our dreams and our struggles.

²⁷ *Naked Sands* is the focus of Chapter Two.

²⁸ Both concepts are examined in Chapters One and Two.

An environmental concern is obvious in her use of materials: they may be found, such as pieces of driftwood (Fig. In.3), gathered from nature or purchased from discount stores. While Ngaromoana does paint on new canvases, she enjoys the process of ‘artistic recycling’, where she transforms objects by physically adding new layers, giving them new meaning, and thus a new life. *Mahitian Queen*, 2008 (Fig. In.4), for example, was painted over a still traceable sewing pattern, pasted onto an old canvas, while some of the *Whaea* paintings of 2009 (Fig. In.5) are painted on samples of wall paper glued on canvas.²⁹



Figure In.3

The *Rubbish Tree* (Fig. In.6) in front of her studio is a monument dedicated to the collection of rubbish, as well as a quiet reminder of its copious quantities. Made of mainly plastic items and bits and pieces Ngaromoana picks up on the beach, after each walk it continuously evolves.

²⁹ These works will be discussed in context and at greater length in Chapters Three and Four

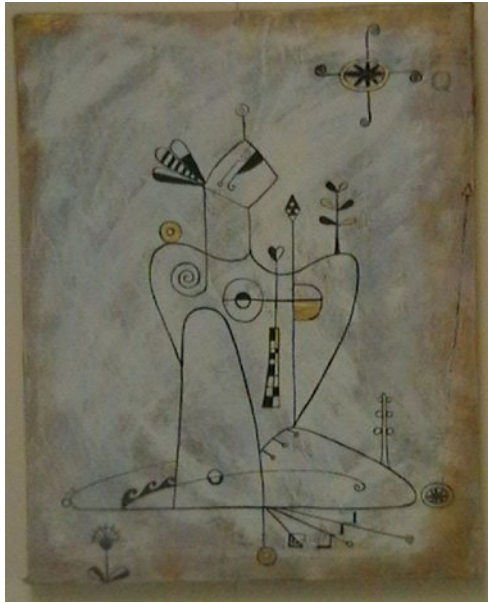


Figure In.4

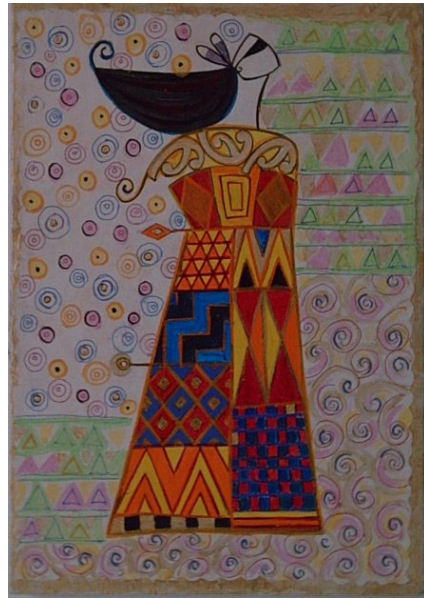


Figure In.5



Figure In.6

In the course of her career the artist has produced a large number of works in different styles and techniques. She has experimented with elements from Maori figurative painting, such as flower and figure paintings, or rock and bark drawings, as well as Maori symbols and kowhaiwhai patterns. Modernist and western influences (Miro, Klee, Klimt) can also be traced. The supports are large, medium or small in scale, square, oblong, triangular, or round. Ngaromoana is not fussy. The works, which are hardly ever signed or dated, are topical and usually produced in series, with certain themes, such as *Wahine*, being cyclically revisited. Primarily a painter, she also mixes media or incorporates photographs, while some of her works are three-dimensional, overlapping into the field of sculpture. More recently she has also added poetry to her already colourful artistic palette.

The aim of this thesis is to introduce Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana and explore her position as an indigenous village artist. In the first instance this position is established through her whakapapa or geneological ties. Therefore, historical and mythological accounts connecting the artist to the Takitimu Canoe as well as the ancestors Ruawharo, Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu, are recorded in this thesis. In this context I reference sources such as Mitchell, Ihimaera and Whaanga, who each provide extensive and complementary insights into the history of the region. However, I show that the artist's connection with her papa kainga village goes beyond her acknowledgment of whakapapa. While informed by ancestral ties, her interaction with her environment is based on the *conscious decision* to respond, engage and take responsibility. Therefore, in her art and life Ngaromoana

reestablishes and reinforces the ancient umbilical connection created by those who came before her. Consequently, interweaving personal with local history, her work is politically motivated in all its different facets and is important within the context of Maori political art.

In order to emphasize the location and relevance of Ngaromoana's work I draw upon postcolonial, political and feminist discourses. Kolig, O'Regan, Smith and Harrington are cited with regards to the identity question. Concerning cultural representation, I specifically draw upon Bhabha and Smith. Bell's focus on the visual representation of Maori in colonial images has been helpful when analyzing Ngaromoana's works on women (self-portraits). Both Nicholas and Pere highlight the spiritual aspects of Maori culture and emphasize the necessity of peoples to develop an understanding of each other. Insights into aspects of *mana wahine* Maori (status of Maori women) are rendered by Te Awekotuku and Mikaere. In addition, Te Awekotuku draws a connection between the abuse of the Earth and the status of Maori women. These authors have helped contextualize Ngaromoana's work within the environment of Aotearoa-New Zealand. Research by feminist authors Chatwick, Duncan, Estes, and French enables the positioning of the artist within a global context. I will establish that, as a woman and artist, Ngaromoana is simultaneously affected by and concerned with issues of the 'global village'. She bridges the gap between *local* and *global*, at the same time imbuing the concept of village with new meaning and *mana*.

Critically, I will convey within the framework of this thesis an understanding of the contribution Ngaromoana's work can make to the waka huia (treasure chest) of stories. Since the concepts informing her art and life are in themselves fluid transcending boundaries of time and space, I endeavour, in analyzing her art not to do so in absolute terms. I also let Ngaromoana speak and provide herself as much information/interpretation as possible. Considering the complexity and inter-connected nature of her work, this thesis pursues the rationale of a topical, more flexible and spiraling writing pattern, rather than a consecutive one based on a biographical or chronological timeline. Some of the terms applied in this context and relevant to a critical engagement with the artist are contentious and subject to debate both within and beyond academic circles. Therefore some definitional parameters are needed and provided below, while other concepts are discussed in greater detail within the individual chapters.

Ngaromoana feels strongly about her *identity* as an indigenous village artist. The **Identity** question must have been asked ever since the first light of consciousness and recognition dawned in the heads of human beings. As a document of early recorded history, the Bible for example, relates many instances of concern with ethnic and social identity both individual and collective. Likewise, Greek mythology is a collection of problems of social identity. These issues and related problems have re-appeared in all epochs all over the globe. They reveal two main concerns:

One is summed up in the familiar modern question, *Who* am I?; the other in that even more pressing problem, *What* am I? The first is generally answered by an

assertion of continuity through genealogy and residence, the second by an assertion of distinctiveness through culture and community. Most people feel they can provide a satisfactory answer to the first question by pointing to their lineage, family status and place of birth or residence. To answer the second question, however, they have to reveal their membership of and adherence to particular cultures and distinctive communities.³⁰

For individuals, of course, these two questions are intertwined. As human beings we have a wide range of possible affiliations or simultaneous identities and move usually with ease - and sometimes with opportunism - from one to the other as circumstances demand. We are women and men, wives, husbands and parents, daughters or sons, we are dark- and fair skinned with all shades in between; members of ethnic groups, nations and religious communities. We identify through our occupations, by the way we live, dress or drive as well as by our memberships in clubs. In short: we have multiple identities, and they are both self ascribed and ascribed by others. Not infrequently there is conflict between the two.

Postcolonial discourses add a third strand to the two familiar traditions in the discourse of identity. The philosophical tradition of identity as the process of self-reflection and the anthropological view of the difference in human identity, are joined by the issue of identity as being a “persistent questioning of the frame, the space of representation, where the image – missing person, invisible eye, Oriental stereotype – is confronted with its difference, its Other.”³¹ These issues, which intersect with feminist theory, are also explored in this thesis.

³⁰ Anthony D. Smith, “The Formation of National Identity” in Henry Harris, *Identity*, 1995, p.130.

³¹ Homi K. Bhaba, *Interrogating identity: The Post Colonial Prerogative*, in Paul du Gay, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman, *Identity: A Reader*, 2000, p. 95.

Ngaromoana identifies as an *indigenous* artist. The concept of **Indigeneity** is closely linked with the question of identity. As a powerful and colourful political movement ‘indigeneity’ has only recently emerged, predominantly - but not exclusively - in so-called 3rd and 4th world countries. It commonly creates the binary of ‘indigenous versus nonindigenous’ and usually identifies the enemy as Western Civilization, White People or Europeans. Indigenism focuses on two main areas: the achievement of certain desired effects in the political, legal and ideological discourses of a country and the revitalization and retraditionalization or construction of culture, or certain, selected aspects of it. Therefore it can be positioned against the postmodern trends of globalization, rationalization and detraditionalisation.³²

The term “Indigenous Peoples” emerged out of the struggles of the American Indian Movement (AIM) and Canadian Indian Brotherhood. The final (plural) ‘s’ is applied as a way of recognizing that there are real differences between indigenous peoples, and to acknowledge their right to self-determination.³³ The term is in itself problematic because it seems to collectivize many distinctly different populations, whose experiences under imperialism have been equally different. However:

The term has enabled the collective voices of colonized people to be expressed strategically in the international arena. It has also been an umbrella enabling communities and peoples to come together, transcending their own colonized context and experiences, in order to learn, share, plan, organize and struggle collectively for self-determination on the global and local stages. Thus the world’s indigenous populations belong to a network of peoples. They share experiences as peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a colonizing society

³² Erich Kolig, *Politics of Indigeneity in the South Pacific*, 2002, p.7.

³³ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p.6.

that has come to dominate and determine the shape and quality of their lives, even after it has formally pulled out. As Wilmer has put it, ‘indigenous peoples represent the unfinished business of decolonization’.³⁴

Other collective terms presently in use are “People of the Land”, “First Nation Peoples”, “Native Peoples”, “Aboriginals” or “Fourth World Peoples”. The indigenous population of Aotearoa New Zealand is generically referred to as **Maori** (see below) or tangata whenua (people of the land). However, as Smith points out, quite contrary to the above description, the term ‘indigenous’ has also been co-opted politically by the descendants of settlers, who

...lay claim to an ‘indigenous’ identity through their occupation and settlement of land over several generations or simply through being born in that place – though they tend not to show up at indigenous peoples meetings nor form alliances that support the self-determination of the people whose forebears have once occupied the land that they have ‘tamed’ and upon which they have settled. Nor do they actively struggle as a society for the survival of indigenous languages, knowledges and cultures. Their linguistic and cultural homeland is somewhere else, their cultural loyalty is to some other place. Their power, their privilege, their history are all vested in their legacy as colonizers.³⁵

On the left side of the political spectrum Boston based anarchist and writer James Herod is wary of and ultimately opposed to the term, as, in his view, it has become a name for an analysis which is unaware of or denies that we live in a capitalist social order. He considers it a theory, of native or indigenous peoples, which tends to replace class analysis, and generates a view of the last five hundred years of world history which is quite at odds with an understanding of capitalism. He argues that viewed historically there is no such thing as an indigenous people, as every

³⁴ *ibid*, p.7.

³⁵ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 1999, p. 7.

people on earth originally came from somewhere else and that the human race is one incredibly jumbled up affair.³⁶

While Herod is not unsupportive of the revolts of people who call themselves indigenous, he considers it quite erroneous to identify the enemy as Western civilization, Europeans or White People, given that European resistance to capitalism has been vigorous and long lasting and that it is only *some* Europeans and only *some* Whites, who have colonized the world. He also rejects the notion of indigenous versus non-indigenous people and prefers instead to think in terms of oppressors and the oppressed, exploiters and the exploited, criminals and victims, rulers and the ruled, rather than in terms of western civilization versus the rest of the world, and certainly rather than Whites versus People of Color. He comments that Ireland as a nation of white people was one of the first countries to be colonized:

European peasants were among the first so-called indigenous or native peoples to be dispossessed and colonized by the emerging capitalist ruling class. They were driven off their lands and forced into wage-slavery. Their villages were destroyed, and their local cultures, as were their unique languages.³⁷

³⁶ James Herod, *Indigeneity*, 2001, electronic resource, unpaginated.

Ibid: "European resistance to capitalism was vigorous and long lasting. It gave rise to massive movements: the labor movement, the cooperative movement, communism, socialism, anarchism, syndicalism. It resulted in revolutions: the revolutions of 1848, the Paris Commune, the failed revolutions in Central Europe in 1919, the Spanish Civil War, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Polish Solidarity, and so forth. There was a worldwide upsurge of anti-capitalist resistance in 1968, and this took place also throughout Europe and the West. Recently there has been another such wave of global opposition to capitalism, but which has appeared also in Seattle, Quebec City, and Genoa. Thus I believe that Indigenism mis-identifies the enemy, and is therefore incompatible with an Association of Free Peoples (anarchism, communism)."

³⁷ Herod, 2001, unpaginated.

Ngaromoana, who does on occasions, and not without tenderness, refer to herself as *black* has not been left unharmed by colonialism. However, in some details her views come close to the arguments put forward by Herod, in that she transcends and moves beyond the confines of the above mentioned dichotomies. I discuss in Chapter One her artistic and personal interpretation of the term and expand on it in Chapter Two, but would like to mention here that for Ngaromoana the terms and meaning of indigeneity and tangata whenua embrace those persons or groups, who base their lives on the premise of engaging in an equal partnership with the planet and therefore, in all dealings, accept the *Earth* and *Nature* as an active participant. This understanding, which I share and support, makes cultural distinctions almost redundant. Instead, it allows their perception of difference as various beautiful colours and hues on the palette of the earth or associations of different spices, textures and smells. However, as we have not quite reached that evolutionary stage, I continue with further definitions as they are presently in use.

The term **Maori** was established concurrently with the arrival of Europeans in this country, initially as a concept of self-identification by the people who already lived here. It translates as ‘usual’ or ‘ordinary’ and identifies the ‘un-usual’, - European - Other as ‘pakeha’.³⁸ Connotations of distinctive ethnicity and culture are implicit, and the term really labels a colonial relationship between tangata whenua and non-indigenous settlers.

³⁸ H.W. Williams, *Dictionary of the Maori Language* also connects the term pakeha to: 2.a. *foreign*. Kai pakeha, an imported variety of kumara. Pakepakeha, pakehakeha 1.n. Imaginary beings resembling men, with fair skins = patupaiarehe. Also *awkward, outlandish*, and 3. *disordered, disarranged*. 1992, p.252.

Te Ao Maori (The Maori World) represents the grossly generalized notion of a unified and homogenous people, which was then and is now inaccurate, because identification happens far more specifically on a ‘tribal’, that is *iwi*, *hapu* (subtribe) and *whanau* (extended family unit) level through *whakapapa* (genealogy).

Whakapapa is unsurpassed as a symbol of Maori identity. Traditionally it linked the individual to the world into which it was born, established a person’s role and place within a hierarchical society, and acted as a determining factor in leadership fundamental to social organization.³⁹

While there are pan-tribal events such as the *Kotahitanga* (Unity) movement, these are usually political and as a rule stem from or are consequences of mutual experiences regarding losses of or threats to land, language, and culture. At the same time equally strong movements support the notion of *Tino Rangatiratanga*, the paramount right of *iwi* for tribal self-determination. Hana O’Regan also makes the following distinction:

Pan-Maori identities first emerged as a result of political movements that were developed in response to threats to the political and economic autonomy of maori tribes. It is possible to distinguish between the pan identity that emerged as a result of *iwi* initiatives and the identity that was created by the power culture and imposed upon *iwi*.⁴⁰

The notion of a pan-maori *cultural* identity - **Maoritanga** - has been in existence on and off since the 1850s, but has been given momentum since the 1950s by two

³⁹ Hana O’Regan, *Ko Tahu, Ko Au, Kai Tahu Tribal Identity*, 2001, p.50.

⁴⁰ O’Regan, 2001, p.106.

related historical circumstances: the urban drift of the late 1940s and the Maori 'cultural revival' since the 1970s.⁴¹ While colonization and interaction between Maori and Pakeha strongly impacted on and altered the tribal environments and different iwi responded to these changes in different ways, it can be said that there was both the eagerness to acquire the tools of the new world as well as the desire to preserve and maintain the old ancestral ways. Specific traditional concepts and cultural practices have been identified as shared by all iwi, such as whakapapa, which as a paramount symbol of Maori identity, also creates a direct link to the land. Some elements of artistic disciplines like weaving, carving, ta moko (tattoo) music and dance are also common to all iwi.⁴² The same is true with regards to the concepts of koha (contribution), mana (rank, status) tapu (restrictions) and utu (reciprocity) as representing four pillars upon which social interaction traditionally rested within the Pacific region.⁴³

Another dimension of Te Ao Maori which requires the transcendence of human interaction and boundaries is outlined by Darcy Nicholas.

It is interesting when you read and contemplate Maori culture, you realize, that we are a collection of many ancient cultures, with similarities expanding the total Pacific and definitely beyond the Pacific. I say contemplate Maori culture because in order to understand our culture, you have to release yourself from your preconceived state of mind and journey upwards. Listen, imagine, feel, become the moon, and the sun, and the clouds, float on the breeze, slide down the rainbow, and journey through the mountains, rivers, and seas. Go for a walk in the forest and you might arrive.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Ibid, p.111.

⁴² However, specific patterns and also songs and dances frequently belong to individual iwi or whanau.

⁴³ These concepts are negotiated under different names across the different Pacific societies.

⁴⁴ Nicholas, 2003.

In this thesis I use the term ‘Maori’ in specific contexts where there seems to be a more general agreement that beliefs, customs or values are shared by individual iwi. However, I apply the term with discrimination bearing in mind its generic overlay and implications. Furthermore, like Darcy Nicholas I have come to believe that:

... to be Maori, is to understand the relationships you have with the sun and the moon, the stars the wind and the rain, and the mist. To understand your relationship with the mountains, the rivers, the trees and the sea. To understand your relationship with all the creatures on earth, and last but not least, to understand your relationships with your family, cousins, and fellow human being.⁴⁵

Mana is explained by Rangimarie Turuki Pere as “multi-form and including psychic influence, control, prestige, power, vested and acquired authority and influence, being influential or binding over others, and that quality of the person that others know he or she has.”⁴⁶ Mana as a form of power or status can also be inherited as in the case of members of highborn families. For Pere the most important form of mana is *mana atua* - the divine right that every person has, as well as everything across the universe, be it a blade of grass, a spider a bird, or a fish.⁴⁷

Tapu is interpreted in different ways by different authors. Again, I refer to Pere who points out that tapu is not openly or deeply discussed, but

a matter of concern if only because its protective and disciplinary qualities are felt most effectively and usefully at this level. It is far from being mere native

⁴⁵ Nicholas, 2003.

⁴⁶ Pere, 1997, p.14.

⁴⁷ Ibid. p.14.

superstition. It is an excellent means of social control, self discipline, conservation and preservation.⁴⁸

She argues that in pre-European Maori society there were no police. The institution of tapu itself enabled communities to have a high level of social control and discipline. Since this type of discipline was self imposed and the people identifying with it were accountable to a higher power, there was no need for policing. Pere defines the concept of tapu as:

a protective measure;
a way of imposing disciplines, social control;
a way of developing an understanding and an awareness of spirituality and its implications;
a way of developing an appreciation and a respect for another human being, another life force, life in general.⁴⁹

While certain areas, such as urupa (cemeteries), mountains and other significant places can have intrinsic tapu, this principle was also extended to areas or situations that were hazardous to the unskilled or children.⁵⁰

Noa as the complimentary or counterpart of tapu, is associated with the spirit of freedom and applied to everyday living and ordinary situations. However, at the same time, it is also a vital part of the most complex rituals and social controls of the Maori people.

The influence and power of noa is very significant to the physical well-being of people by freeing them from any quality or condition that makes them subject to spiritual and/or ceremonial restriction and influences. The concept

⁴⁸ Ibid. p.40.

⁴⁹ Pere, 1997, p.40.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

of noa is usually associated with warm, benevolent, life-giving, constructive influences, including ceremonial purification.⁵¹

The above terms and concepts are present in aspects throughout this thesis. There are others, such as mauri, poutama, mana whenua and mana wahine, which are discussed in the context of Ngaromoana's work and therefore incorporated into the relevant chapters. In doing so, the relationship between Te Ao Maori, Ngaromoana, the Opoutama village and universal issues, particularly those pertaining to women and land, are explored.

It will be demonstrated that her art is unique. Unlike many other academically trained artists who choose to work in urban studio or gallery settings, she operates from her village and marae base. In order to appreciate Ngaromoana's notion of indigenous village art, her ancestral waka Takitimu, 'the canoe of the Gods',⁵² as well as her formidable forebears Ruawharo, Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu, are discussed in detail. Exploring important spiritual concepts connected to these ancestors and embedded in the Opoutama area, I show that the artist's work and life are informed by these taonga tuku iho (treasures handed down from the past). This will facilitate an understanding of the kinship ties Ngaromoana nurtures with her environment which she also expresses in her active involvement in projects of community development, conservation and sustainability.

⁵¹ Ibid, p.56.

⁵² Witi Ihimaera, *The Matriarch*, 1986, p.108

Over the years of her practice Ngaromoana has been involved in Maori politics, particularly so with regards to the appropriation of land. Like many of her colleagues, such as Ralph Hotere, Emare Karaka, Sewyn Muru and Peter Robinson, she has used her paintbrush as a tool to draw attention to unjust circumstances. In exploring *Naked Sands*, the major project the artist completed between 2005 and 2006, it will become evident that her work sits well within the whakapapa of Maori political art and must be seen as an important contribution.

Ngaromoana's work must also be viewed within the framework of feminist art, specifically so, as it raises issues concerning the representation of women. I show that her paintings of women are - in aspects - self portraits, which concurrently forge a link between herself, mana wahine Maori, and the status of women in general. Therefore, I discuss some of her paintings as well as parts of her Master's exhibition *Naked and...* in the context of both post colonial and feminist theory. In doing so, it will become evident that Ngaromoana reclaims the image of the female body. At the same time she re-contextualizes some utensils as items of female identity. This obviously makes her work very important within the framework of feminist art.

An analysis of her very recent *Grasskirt Paintings* and the *Whaea* works (2008, 2009) will bring my thesis to its conclusion. Inspired by her small granddaughter Waipiata, the *Grasskirt* works (Fig. In.7) radiate pure joy and happiness, while

the *Whaea* paintings reflect maturity and dignity. Waipiata, the child, and Ngaromoana, the grandmother, merge and become one. Ngaromoana has come full cycle, both as an artist and as a woman. I consider it my privilege to be able to signpost in the context of my thesis some of the significant milestones along her pathway.



Figure In.7



Figure In.8

Paint'em up. Woman's Story.
Strong One.⁵³

⁵³ Narputta Nangala, 1995, in Isaacs, *Spirit Country*, unpaginated.

Tu mai awa, tu mai moana
 Ko koe takahia noa tia e au
 Tupe aunuku tupe aurangi
 Whati ki runga, whati ki raro
 Urumarangaranga
 Perahoki ra taku manu-nui na Tane
 Ka Tatau atu Ki roto o Nuku-ngaere
 Maia whiwhia, maia rawea
 Maia whakatakaia.
 Ka taka te huki rawea
 Koro I runga, koro I raro
 Koro I Tawhirimatea.
 Ki kora hoki koe tu mai ai
 Ka hura te Tamatea nunui
 Ka hura te Tamatea roroa.
 Te Kauaka nuku, te kauaka rangi
 Te ai a nuku, te ai a rangi
 Te kura mai hukihuki
 Te Kaweau tetere
 Kawea a nuku kawea a tai
 Oi! Tumata kokiriritia!
 Hoatu waka ki waho
 Hoatu waka ki uta
 Ngaruhinga atu, ngaruhinga mai
 I runga te mata wahine
 I raro te mata Tane.
 Huki nawenawe.
 Tenei te waka ka whakairia
 Ko Takitimu te waka ee,
 Ko Tamatea ariki nui te tangata⁵⁴

⁵⁴ J. H. Mitchell *Takitimu*, 1972, p.33.

This moteatea (chant) was incited by Ruawhoro, the High Priest of the Takitimu waka, when it was launched in the historical lagoon of Pikopiki-i-whiti, and a trial of seaworthiness was carried out. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain an authorized translation. A detailed account of Ruawhoro, who is Ngaromoana's ancestor, and the Takitimu canoe follow later in this thesis.

Ko te uruwhenua o Ruawharo
 Te tohunganui o te waka Takitimu
 Ko Tara Paikea te Maunga iti, te Maunga tapu
 Nga puke o Tunanui
 Puke te Nui, te waipuna, te waiora, te waimaori
 Ko te Ngahere o Poutama
 Ruawharo te marae.
 Ngai Tama te hapu
 Opoutama te papakainga
 Waipiata te ngutu awa
 Ko te Moananui a Kiwa te awa
 Poutama te mauri
 Whanau Ati Hau
 Nga Toka ati Hau
 Poutini/Tunanui te Tokanui o Ruawharo
 Ko te kirikiri o Ruawharo
 Ruawharo te tetahiki Ikawhenua
 Ko te Upoko O Tataramoa, Te Nohonga
 Ruawharawhara te urupa
 Matiu te tama o Ruawharo
 Tu mai te whenua
 Tu mai te moana

The decedents of Ruawharo the Navigator of Takitimu Canoe
 Name of the hills behind Opoutama from Waikokopu to Morere
 The small mountain the sacred mountain of the sperm whale
 Big Hill the name of the watersource and supply
 The bush of Opoutama
 The village of Opoutama
 Waipiata the estuary and lagoon, wetland, river mouth
 The ancient sea river that ran between the island and mainland
 Poutama the principle life force of achievement
 Whanau ati Hau the principle life force of all rock
 The mussel rocks
 The guiding beacon force of Ruawharo
 The sacred sand of Ruawharo
 The beach named Ruawharo from Opoutama to Ikawhenua
 The Sands of Tataramoa, the accretion camp
 Ruawharawhara the cemetery
 Matiu the son turned to rock by Ruawharo
 So stands the land.
 So stands the sea⁵⁵

⁵⁵ This taupara (formal introduction) was composed by Ngaromoana, who also provided the English version. She uses it in karakia and to introduce herself at formal occasions.

Chapter One

I am not painting just for my pleasure; there is the meaning, knowledge and power. This is the earthly painting for the creation and for the land story. The land is not empty; the land is full of knowledge, full of story, full of goodness, full of energy, full of power. Earth is our mother, the land is not empty. There is the story I am telling you – special, sacred, important.¹

Ngaromoana paints both, of and for the land, quite like the aboriginal artist quoted above. Earth is her mother. Her works tell stories - special, sacred and important. There is meaning, knowledge, power and there is also pleasure in her art. The Opoutama village environment is not empty; it is instead “full of knowledge, full of story, full of goodness, full of energy, and full of power”.

The artist identifies as an indigenous village artist. In order to explore this notion, this chapter focuses on her whakapapa that connects her to her local area. I speak of her ancestors and of stories and events surrounding them: Takitimu, “the holy ark of the iwi Maori”² which is said to have carried only chiefs or tohunga (skilled people, specialists) brought knowledge, as well as history and tradition to this country; Ruawharo, the tohunga nui of the Takitimu, who brought taonga (treasure) such as the sacred sands of Hawaiki. Those he spread along the local beaches where he also planted the mauri of poutama and whales and fish into the sands. I tell of the

¹ Wandjuk Marika, in Isaacs, 1995, p.15.

² Witi Ihimaera, 1986, p.252.

love story between Kahungunu and the legendary chieftainess Rongomaiwahine, whose praises are still sung by East Coast iwi. These historical accounts are interwoven with biographical and artistic references while some of Ngaromoana's artworks pertaining to the above events and concepts are discussed.

I show how upon this indigenous base the artist builds her life and how from this base her art is informed. In doing so, it will become evident that Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana is indeed a visual story teller. Furthermore, I show how, in addition to genealogical ties, her status as a village artist is supported by her practical and spiritual engagement with issues of conservation, sustainability and community development.

An analysis of these complex connections between the past and present, and their links to Ngaromoana and her art, elucidates the complexity of her artistic practice. In order to ensure an easier flow of this chapter, I utilize a topical and flexible, spiraling writing pattern that draws upon a form of argument commonly used in Maori discourse³, rather than a chronological exploration of her work.

³ In a commonly used form of Maori speech making (whaikorero), "an acknowledgement of the important celestial and ancestral beings is placed foremost and is followed by a procession of references to landmarks, political alliances and other historical events. These references in the whaikorero are then used to focus the attention on a topical issue that concerns the audience such as the reason for their gathering." Jo Diamond, 1998, p.16.

Ngaromoana was born in Wairoa, on November 5, 1957. Her name which translates as “Lost-At-Sea”, demonstrates an intimate bond with her native area. It was given to her in memory of her grandfather Tom and tells of her father’s love for his father and the village’s love for this old man - Tom Raureti. A local fisherman, he drowned while delivering mail to the lighthouse keeper of Waikawa (Portland Island). Ngaromoana relates:

When he returned from World War I, he took up a lease to farm sheep and would row or with his 50 seagull engine brave some of the best and most horrendous sea conditions. I still love listening to my uncle talk of their adventures. When my grandfather drowned he became part of the sea, and I was named after this event. Today, when I look out to Waikokopu and Waikawa Island from Opoutama, I know he is part of this place; he is part of this beach, as are my parents, nannies and ancestors, who lie in the sand in the urupa next to the road in the Blue Bay subdivision.⁴



Figure 1.1 *The Opoutama Beach Front*

⁴ Personal communication, September 2007. The subdivision of the Bluebay Camping Ground and Ngaromoana’s personal and artistic responses to that process are discussed in Chapter Two.

When Ngaromoana was 6 years old, the family home at Opoutama burnt down and a sister died in the fire. As a result the family moved to Napier, where her parents worked in factories and fields from dawn to dusk to support the family. They felt isolated from their hapu and family village, and treated as immigrants and strangers by the Heretaunga Maori.⁵ At the age of 9 she produced the “best crayon picture in the world of Peter Snell”⁶, but found that there was no support for a young Maori girl with the desire to draw and paint, which she did constantly.

After years away and what Ngaromoana calls ‘a lot of drifting about’⁷ but always practicing her art, she returned to Hastings in the late 1980s and found formal artistic guidance with Sandy Adsett, a senior artist of considerable repute.⁸ He became her mentor and, in her own words, showed her “which end of the paintbrush to hold”. Ngaromoana became involved in the local and regional Maori art scene and was also the Arts Coordinator for the iwi based *Takitimu Festival* in 1989, organizing its first visual arts component. Until then the focus had been on kapa haka, while Maori visual arts were represented under the main arts umbrella of Nga Puna Waihangā.⁹ As this was a time where iwi devolution and individual iwi

⁵ Personal communication, April 2008.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ A chronological outlay of Ngaromoana’s biography can be found in Appendices.

⁸ Sandy Adsett (Ngati Kahungunu) was born in Wairoa in 1939. He is an arts educator, curator and artist who has exhibited extensively in various parts of the world. He was a founding member of Nga Puna Waihangā and tutored at Toihoukura in Gisborne. He is presently Head of Department for the Maunga Kura Toi: Bachelor of Maori Arts programme at Toimairangi, Te Wananga o Aotearoa, which he established in Hastings in 2002. *Taiawhio II*, 2007, p.293.

⁹ Nga Puna Waihangā, the Maori Artists and Writers Association, was led by Para Matchitt, Cliff Whiting, Arnold Wilson, Sandy Adsett and Hone Tuwhare. Founded in 1973 it was formed to support and promote the works of Maori practitioners.

strengthening were taking place, this festival was the opportunity for people to promote their hapu or Kahungunu alliances and affiliations by marriage. The *Takitimu Festival* of 1989 was particularly significant for Ngaromoana as she was able to promote and showcase her art as well as her iwitanga. It provided the first opportunity for her to celebrate her female ancestry and her perception of Maori women. She submitted a work consisting of three panels, one of which shows the eight wives of Kahungunu. Rongomaiwahine, Ngaromoana's principal ancestress was his fifth wife.¹⁰

The artist strongly identifies with this legendary chieftainess and considers Rongomaiwahine to be an exceptional role model – not only for herself but also for other women. She says:

When you look at the meaning, the name Rongomaiwahine, “Listen to the woman”, is not just a name, it is really a concept. She was certainly noble but she was also worthwhile, she was a person in her own right, who owned herself and was in control of her life. I like that about her, not just her ancestral place, but her as a concept, a way of believing in yourself, as a young woman or as an old woman: I am able to tell my own story with nothing getting lost in translation.

She was a chieftainess, which means that she had leadership qualities and with leadership come the diplomatic qualities, too. Also, she retained ownership or control and responsibilities for her lands, even when she married she still held that mana. Since her beauty was praised, she also had feminine qualities that were in her favour. Her first husband was a carver, and her second husband was a provider, so she would have had relationships that were probably very good for her, and strengthened her.¹¹

¹⁰ I discuss this particular painting in Chapter Three, Figure 3.1.

¹¹ Personal communication, April 2008.



Figure 1.2 *Flag featuring Rongmaiwahine*

At the end of the 19th century, when inspirational rallies were organized by leading Church of England Maori to strengthen their movement, the people of Mahia selected her as their mana, and designed their flag accordingly (Fig.1.2). *Flag It* (Fig.1.3) shows Ngaromoana's version of a Rongomaiwahine banner.



Figure 1.3

A detailed account of the legendary chieftainess and her relationship with Kahungunu explains why she is held in such high esteem. Descending from both Ruawharo and Popoto, the commander of the Kurahaupo canoe, she lived in the mid 1400s, and was an ariki tapairu, a woman of great mana and very high rank. Her romance with Kahungunu is a much loved and often told story. Many of their descendants believe Rongomaiwahine to be of superior lineage and therefore identify as Ngaati Rongomaiwahine rather than as Ngaati Kahungunu. In relation to her status Kuni Jenkins writes:

Within the Kahungunu area of the Hawkes' Bay they sing of their great ancestress Rongomaiwahine even to this day and how she brought to heel the great macho Kahungunu. She had more than beauty to attract him. She had great mana and prestige. Her rank was of the noblest and she commanded great respect.¹²

Why Rongomaiwahine was given her name and the circumstances surrounding her birth are unclear. However, it seems that the tapu restriction which, according to different accounts such as for example Te Awakotuku¹³ traditionally denied women the right to speak on marae, was never in place for Ngati Rongomaiwahine. Here women did and do speak on the marae.¹⁴ If they are actually 'listened to' as the ancestress suggests, is perhaps an altogether different story. Ngaromoana advises that many of the older women are not really comfortable with that privilege.

¹² Kuni Jenkins, "Reflections of the Status of Maori Women", *Te Puia*, No.1, Vol.1, 1992, p.44.

¹³ Ngahuia Te Awakotuku, *Mana Wahine Maori*, 1991, p.45.

¹⁴ Personal information obtained from Arthur Williams in 2007.

Kahungunu, Rongomaiwahine's second husband, is said to be one of the most interesting characters in Maori history. A great grandson of Tamatea Arikinui, the captain of the Takitimu canoe, Kahungunu was born in Kaitaia. Legend has it that he was tall, handsome, very attractive to the opposite sex, renowned for his charismatic leadership and, according to Mitchell [1972: 73] not a warrior, "in fact he was the reverse". He supervised the building of villages, cultivation, drainage and irrigation systems, was a great hunter and supported the arts of carving, ta moko and canoe-building.¹⁵

He was also a great traveler, who one day left behind his first wife Hinetapu and their children to head south. He traveled to Otira, Turanga and Whakatane, marrying several high-born women along the way and fathering many children.¹⁶ According to oral histories Kahungunu also married a lady called Hine-puariari during his travels to Whaka-oneone. Mitchell relates:

As the news of the marriage spread, the women of the district came to congratulate the bride. On being asked how she was faring with her husband, the bride replied: "Kaore hoki tera e hanga o taku tane, kaore e rupeke mai ana, takoto noa mai te nuigi waho." (The remarkable thing is that the treasure of my husband could not be admitted and the major part of it was obliged to remain outside.) When this gossiping remark of the brown daughter of Eve reached the ears of Rongomai-wahine, from a visiting lady from Mahia Peninsula, she jokingly and challengingly replied, "Na temea ano ra he kopua papaku, mehemea e taka mai ana ki te kopua hohonu a Rapa e tuhera atu nei, pokopoko ana ia ki roto." (It is because it is a shallow pool; should it have fallen into the

¹⁵ Mitchell, 1972, p.74. "At a very early age he appeared to have taken a leading part in advising and managing systemic operations, both on land and at sea. For, as a young man it was said of him: Kahungunu is an industrious man, and one who knows how to manage works, both on land and at sea. ('Ko Kahungunu he tangata ahuwhehenua; mohio ki te whakahaere i nga mahi o uta, me o te tai')." Ibid.

¹⁶ In New Zealand Ngati Kahungunu is today the third largest grouping of tribes and hapu (sub-tribes), all of whom are descendants of Kahungunu.

deep pool of Rapa (her father) now opening towards him, it would have been lost out of sight.”¹⁷

Further down the East Coast he heard of Rongomaiwahine, who lived on the Mahia peninsula. Intrigued by the challenging remark she is supposed to have made with reference to his sexual prowess,¹⁸ and reports of her legendary beauty, he traveled to her home at Nukutaurua. At the time of his arrival the chieftainess was married to Tamatakutai. When Kahungunu realized that she lived up to her reputation, he decided to win her for himself. According to Mitchell: “What followed was one of the most important love matches of the East Coast, not only because of the intrigue surrounding it, but because it undoubtedly changed the whole Maori history of the East Coast.”¹⁹

Kahungunu consequently surrendered his wanderlust – at least for some years – and, once he had revealed his true identity to Rongomaiwahine, the pair settled at Mahia. In order to win her over he had shown himself to be creative, cunning and devious, as he caused the death of Rongomaiwahine’s first husband. However, it is also significant to note that during his lifetime the tribe was “never attacked nor

¹⁷ Mitchell, 1972, p.76.

¹⁸ Such ease and confidence in the expression of sexuality must be seen in connection with the great mana that was, based on tikanga Maori, connected with the female genitalia. According to Ani Mikaere “the spiritual force of female sexuality and the centrality of the female to birth and death lent a special significance and authority to the way women were able to fulfil the duties of spiritual leadership.” Ani Mikaere, *The Balance Destroyed, Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori*, 2003, p.59.

¹⁹ Mitchell, 1972, p.79.

molested apart from one raid by his own nephew, which proved more playful than destructive.”²⁰

Ngaromoana traces her ancestry to both, Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu.

While it could be argued that Ngati Rongomaiwahine and Ngati Kahungunu are one people, Whaanga posits:

A central issue is that of mana – the assertion of the superior mana of Rongomaiwahine, and the fact that the mana whenua of Te Mahia belonged to her. Kahungunu was, after all, born in Kaitaia. However desirable this tall handsome man was, regardless of the remarkable rangatira qualities he undoubtedly possessed, even acknowledging his status as the great-grandson of Tamatea Arikinui, to many of Ngati Rongomaiwhaine he is still only the second husband of their arikinui, Rongomaiwahine. In a reversal of the more usual assertion that Rongomaiwahine was the principal wife of Kahungunu, they see Kahungunu as the principal husband of Rongomaiwahine.²¹



Figure 1.4 *Rongomaiwahine*, detail of lintel, Ruawharo Marae, Wairoa.

²⁰ Ibid, p.88.

²¹ Mere Whaanga, *A Carved Cloak for Tahu*, 2004, p.93.

The strong links tying Ngaromoana to her ancestress become particularly evident in her *Naked Sands*... and the subsequent *Naked and*...projects.²² Addressing both, mana whenua and mana wahine, these works connect directly into the spirit of Rongomaiwahine. A discussion of the representation of Rongomaiwahine at Takitimu Marae (Fig.1.4) is helpful in decoding the symbolism of the *Naked and*... works which address issues of female representation.

This carving on the pare (lintel) of Takitimu Marae in Wairoa exhibits Rongomaiwahine squatting above the entrance door with her genitalia exposed. Mitchell describes this central full-frontal representation of Ngaromoana's ancestress as "a grotesque female figure with legs reaching right across the doorway".²³ Similar female figures squatting above the entrance doors of important marae are often interpreted as alluding to Hine-nui-te-po defeating Maui, or as Papatuanuku giving birth to the main gods.²⁴ Mitchell emphasizes that, apart from honouring and remembering an ancestress as the origin of the life of the tribe, such pare served a purpose of protection and were to guard the meeting house against any person entering it with evil intentions against either the house or its occupants:

Should an evildoer enter he would share the fate of Maui, either in loss of his

²² These projects are discussed in Chapters Two, Three.

²³ Decidedly uncomfortable in relating details about this pare, he resorts to "leaving embellishments to a future Maori orator", pacing the marae of Takitimu, providing explanations in the "picturesque adjectives of the native tongue." As politely as possible (in his own words, and thus perhaps revealing how his own position towards mana wahine has been compromised) he relates the myth of Maui, the trickster demi-god, who tried to win eternal life for humankind by setting out to crush the heart of Hine-nui-te-po, the Goddess of the underworld: By the passage through which man is born into the world Maui entered her body while she was asleep; however, her bodyguard, a bird, laughed loudly and she awoke. She closed her vagina around Maui's loins and he was crushed to death. Mitchell, 1972, p.86-87

²⁴ Roger Neich in Davidson (ed.), *Maori Art and Culture*, 1996, p.106.

life or of his prestige and power. The people of the tribe and their friends, on entering, were under the protection of the ancestress, and were free from spells and evil practices.²⁵

According to Neich, the *pare* is, in symbolic terms, the most important carving in a meeting house, marking the passage between two different realms or states of being and representing the domains of two different gods.²⁶ The outside of a *marae* is considered *tapu*, as opposed to the inside of a meeting house, which is considered *noa*. Women were thought to have the power of negotiating these different states of existence and female genitalia were accredited the ability of removing *tapu* from the visitors entering the house. The *karanga* call performed by women during the *powhiri* (welcoming) ceremony also serves this function. In addition, Mitchell contributes:

It has been known in the past that certain high Maoris have refused to enter certain meeting houses lest they give honour to an ancestress not their own. This question was raised when the Maori King of Waikato, King Koroki, arrived to open the Takitimu House. In certain circumstances it might mean shame and a lowering of prestige for a high born Maori to pass under the widespread figure of the ancestress of another tribe. In this instance however it was shown that Koroki had descended through a high line from Rongomai-wahine. Therefore he willingly entered the house with added rather than decreased dignity. Needless to say the ceremony was not performed without the reciting of appropriate charms.²⁷

Like Rongomaiwahine, the ancestor Ruawharo (Fig.1.5) has provided much inspiration for Ngaromoana. He arrived in the area approximately 1350 AD. His

²⁵ Mitchell, p.87.

²⁶ Neich in Davidson, 1996, p.106. Neich further explains that “The *marae* outside is often referred to as the domain of Tumatauenga, the god of war, reflecting the hostilities of debate on the *marae*, in contrast to the interior of the meeting house which is the domain of Rongo, the god of agriculture and peaceful pursuits, who calms the people and ensure peace within the intimacy of the house. This threshold is a dangerous place where one should not linger.” (Ibid).

²⁷ Mitchell, pp.87-88.

story and that of the famous Takitimu waka (canoe) are intertwined. An extended discussion of their journey from Hawaiki²⁸ to Aotearoa can help to clarify their significance to Ngaromoana and community. Not only are these stories the underlying canvases upon which many of her pictures are painted and have therefore provided tremendous artistic inspiration for Ngaromoana, but they have also been the guidelines for her personal and political engagement with her environment.

Historical accounts of the Takitimu differ in that some say that the Horouta canoe, by which the Gisborne and East Coast iwi identify, and the Takitimu were the same, or two hulls of one waka.²⁹ According to Mitchell it was one of the seven great canoes used in the Maori migration to Aotearoa, and constructed under the strictest observations of tapu for the sole purpose of carrying only chiefs and the sacred relics of the past to the new country. He relates that “women and children were not permitted aboard the Takitimu canoe, but were left wailing on the beach.”³⁰ In an account first published in 1925, Thomas Lambert, then editor of the *Wairoa Guardian*, writes:

The Takitimu was a very sacred canoe, not only by reason of the many and varied ceremonies performed over her by the tohunga to render her seaworthy and proof against the waves and tempest of the great ocean of Kiwa, but because the chiefs and priests were the repositories of the ancient lore of their race, and it was they who brought much of the old Hawaiikian knowledge taught in the whare-wananga, or lodge of instruction, to the new land of Aotearoa.³¹

²⁸ I have used the respective spellings of the name Hawaiki (Hawaiiki) as I found them in the respective accounts.

²⁹ Whaanga, 2004, p.44, and pp.52-71.

³⁰ Mitchell, 1972, p.60.

³¹ Thomas Lambert, *Story Of Old Wairoa And The East Coast New Zealand*, 1998, p.76.

Ruawharo descended from a line of chiefs, but was not, according to Mitchell, himself an ariki (first-born in a chiefly family). Together with his younger brother Tupai he sought to gain knowledge of the earth and the skies from Timuwhaka-iria, a renowned priest in Hawaiki. After a course of study they succeeded and “Ruawharo became the guardian of the gods of the earth and the ocean, while to Tupai was granted the guardianship of the gods of the heavens and of the *whare-wananga*.”³²



Figure 1.5 *Ruawharo*, carving at the entrance of Takitimu Marae, Wairoa

³² Mitchell, 1972, p.60.

Once declared ready the Takitimu left the shores of Rangiatea under the command of Tamatea Ariki Nui, together with the other vessels of the main migration. The flotilla reached Rarotonga, where further and final provisions were taken on board. First landfall was made in Awanui, in the Far North, and some of the crew decided to settle, while the waka continued its journey further down the East Coast of the North Island. Mitchell comments:

The Takitimu held a precious burden of knowledge, history and tradition in view of the type of personnel which she carried. In all their landings down the coast these experts, by special rites, involving the lighting of ceremonial fires, implanted the mauri, or life-giving spirit, of the whare-wananga in the land. This was a symbolic act, but the symbolism was given practical expression in the years that followed, when these places became shrines, ever kept sacred. As occasion offered buildings took shape on or near the spots to house the actual colleges which were an essential part of the life of each tribe.³³

Upon landing the Takitimu canoe at Nukutaurua, Ruawharo decided to settle.³⁴ He named the peninsula Te Mahia, because it resembled a part of his original homeland, Te Mahia-mai-tawhiti (the sound heard from a distance). The first whare wananga (house for instruction in occult lore), Ngaheru-mai-tawhiti, at Waikawa, became the spiritual centre of the area; as the origin of the mauri, or life principle, which controlled the whole of the East Coast this area became a most sacred location.³⁵

The concept of mauri is not easy to define in English. It could be described as ‘life giving spirit’ or ‘life energy’ or perhaps as the ‘divine breath that permeates all existence’.

³³ Mitchell, 1972, pp. 42-43.

³⁴ The name Nukutaurua is also still in use today.

³⁵ In his novel *The Matriarch*, 1986, pp. 252- 277, Witi Ihimaera gives a poetic and detailed account of the events surrounding Takitimu and Ruawharo.

Pere explains:

Each individual has a mauri that remains throughout his or her existence. All living things, lakes, rivers, the sea, the bush and buildings have a mauri that should be appreciated and respected. It helps one to relate and care for everything across the universe. Mauri is an in depth term and is one that can pertain to an individual's psyche alongside other people or it can also pertain to a talisman, the physical symbol of the hidden principle that protects vitality, fruitfulness, etcetera.³⁶

Ruawharo also planted the mauri of the whales and the fish of the sea. Performing the ultimate sacrifice he planted his three sons along the sea-coast as mauri, with the purpose of establishing and extending the feeding grounds of whales and fish.³⁷

Such accounts can illuminate the reverence given to Ruawharo by Ngaromoana and her community. I draw once more upon Mitchell:

He set out in his canoe, and placed Matiu near Waikokopu Harbour. Proceeding further south, he left Makaro at Aropaoa-nui, and on reaching the mouth of the Ngaru-roro River, near the town of Clive in Hawke's Bay he placed his last son Moko-tu-a-raro. All of them were turned into rocks, which can be still seen today.³⁸

Oral histories and concepts such as the above are embedded in the

Opoutama village environment. Ngaromoana is enveloped in its stories.

Transmitting powerful spiritual images and metaphors, they inform her day-to-day responses as well as her art. As both, a result and a manifestation of

³⁶ Pere, 1997, p.12.

³⁷ Whaanga in *Te Ara, Maori Peoples of New Zealand*, 2004, p.178. She further explains that "Some of New Zealand's earliest whaling stations were at Mahia. In 1837 the Ward brothers established a station at Waikokopu. Whales were especially plentiful around the peninsula-Captain Ellis's station at Kinikini caught 26 sperm whales in 1845. The Mahia whaling stations were almost as infamous as those at Kororareka, in the Bay of Islands, for the lawlessness of their inhabitants". (Ibid.)

³⁸ Mitchell, 1972, p.60.

that union, she has over the years rendered these stories in many of her paintings and created her own versions and interpretations.

In 1996 Ngaromoana felt drawn back home. After spending years away the land was calling and she responded. Together with her husband and their young family she moved back to Opoutama, returning to a simpler and more meaningful lifestyle. Revisiting the places of her childhood, feeling with her whole being the magic of the area, hearing again the stories of old, Ngaromoana was profoundly affected by the village. She connected with it on a deeper level, also building more intimate relationships with her extended family and neighbours. She began to identify as the village artist. She had come home. And she began to paint the local stories.

One such story relating to an old myth was *Ruawharo's Seven Pet Whales* (Fig. 1.6). In this large scale painting the whales can be seen swimming around the Mahia peninsula – here, as the geographical outlay of the peninsula suggests, interpreted by the artist as a lady's leg wearing a high heel. The imaginary lady's stocking exhibits a strongly geometric black and white staircase pattern. It alludes to the concept of poutama and, of course, to the Opoutama village.



Figure 1.6

Increasingly the village became more than an external skin, shell, or some sort of suburb in which she just happened to live, instead it became a living and breathing space, where each day everyone contributed to its appearance and to the way it provided for them. For Ngaromoana it became a spiritual conduit, a portal revealing things that had happened there in times long past. Now Opoutama became her true *turangawaewae*: the place where she could stand and be, and have a sense of her past, present and future.³⁹

For a period of approximately 5 years, between 2000 and 2005, she developed a series called *Mahitian Blue*, paintings about the journey of the Takitimu canoe from

³⁹ The concept of *turangawaewae* identifies the connection between *whakapapa* and land. O'Regan, 2001, p.51.

Tahiti to Rarotonga. In these works she used different shades of blue and also incorporated shells. She says:

The many hues, colours of the ocean as it changes with season, wind, and sun – I have felt that the shells, too, are our bones. In Rarotonga there is a group of stones marking the departure of the Takitimu at a place called Tangiihia. Sandy Adsett once told me that he could sense a connection upon one of his visits to Raro. I can only imagine the magic of these old homelands through the intensities of the blues and the heat of the sands.⁴⁰

The sand has always been an important taonga to Maori. A traditional belief was that a burial in the sand would hasten the journey to Te Reinga and therefore most of the ancient urupa are in the sand. For the Opoutama community it is even more precious, as Ruawharo brought gifts of sacred sands from Hawaiki and then spread those over the many beaches in the area in order to create a visible and material connection with the homelands. Referencing these sacred gifts Ngaromoana has frequently used sand in her works. Painted in acrylics these are often executed on the pieces of driftwood she finds on the local beaches (Fig.1.7 - 1.10).

For her, studying the microscopic world of sand is a very special exercise, which also connects her to other indigenous cultures. She explains:

When painting sand, painting in dots was a very meditative experience. These paintings are very indigenous and I feel a strong connection to the works of Australian Aboriginal artists. Exploring the colours of sand and its infinite materials, feldspar, mica, silica, and bone, shell, with every particle having been created at its own pace makes me wonder about the time it took to make Opoutama beach, or any other beach for that matter, and puts time into a

⁴⁰ Personal communication, September 2006. Unfortunately it was not possible to access photos of these paintings.

different perspective. I got stuck on the internet for a week, just looking at sand particles.⁴¹



Figure 1.7



Figure 1.8



Figure 1.9



Figure 1.10

For Ngaromoana village art is a philosophy: the concept of a simple and more basic lifestyle, based on her real needs. She believes that both her life and her art are simple and basic and can therefore reflect these understandings. She thus also addresses issues of conservation, sustainability and community development as the main themes underlying her work, and explains:

It is about being very much in touch with the environment and the sustainability of that environment – so that what ever you do, you have the awareness that

⁴¹ Personal communication, September 2007

everything around you is going to be intact and will grow and flourish – not be used up and left bare.⁴²



Figure 1.11

As a fluid boundary between sea and land, the sand also represents an important concept, which Ngaromoana explores in her *Rakahore* (Fig. 1.11) and *Niho Taniwha I-II* (Fig. 1.12, 1.13) paintings. They tell stories about the atua (deity, supernatural being) of the surrounding land and sea. The sand has its own atua, Hine One, the sand maiden. Hine One was sent with her brother Rakahore, the cliff faces and Hine Tua Kirikiri, the gravel maiden, to protect Papatuanuku from the biting waves of Hinemoana. Ngaromoana further describes:

Tane Mahuta tries to protect Papatuanuku from the jealousy of Hinemoana as she bites into the land with her many armies of waves. It is with concern that he sends his grandchildren – Rakahore, the cliff face, Hine Tu a Kirikiri, the gravel maiden and Hineone the sand maiden, to stand up and absorb the waves. When

⁴² Personal communication, September 2007.

you stand on the Opoutama beach in front of Bluebay you see the orchestration of these ancient observations and can't be but amazed by the majesty of it all.⁴³

While *Rakahore* (Fig.1.11) is executed on driftwood in the dotted manner of the *Sand Paintings* series, the *Niho Taniwaha* works (Figs. 1.12, 1.13) show a different technique. Painted in fine brushstrokes and different shades of blue and purple they are reminiscent of pencil drawings. The waves can be seen biting into the land like niho, like the teeth of a taniwha. Oval shapes with raised edges are to remind of the contours they leave in the sand.



Figure 1.12



Figure 1.13

⁴³ Personal communication, September 2007.

Ngaromoana uses her art as a way of conveying messages. This fits with her understanding of the Opoutama village. Here, as she points out, a lot of things get said without people actually talking a lot. In her recollection her grandparents, for example, spoke very little. She explains:

The gestures, tone, the way your body moves, are much bigger in the transference of information than just merely speaking, of which we all probably do far too much – at least I do. Speaking can put you further away from what you mean, than actually determine what you are feeling and meaning.⁴⁴

In this context Ngaromoana remembers her grandmother's younger sister, Auntie Maggie. This aunt died only recently in the village at the age of 97. A fluent speaker of te reo (Maori language), she had another very special way of expressing herself, which Ngaromoana used to observe at hui (gatherings) and tangi (funeral ceremonies). Her karanga (call, summon, welcome) and chants were often not identifiable as actually called or sung in 'real language'. "The chants were so deep in that the sound that she made would go right through your body and vibrate and send you to a past. The sound was very ethereal."⁴⁵

Ngaromoana likes to think that perhaps some of her paintings come from a similar place as her aunt's chants, while others she believes are mere surface decorations, and that she will have to search a lot deeper to reach that layer of her soul. She chants as well, looking for that sound and that pace of sound, which is probably connected to the land and belongs to village. She states that we bury that type of deep emotion and cannot reach that depth of breath with all our rushing around and

⁴⁴ Personal communication, April 2008.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

all the things we are usually doing. Her aunt, however, when chanting here at tangi, was able to reach deep inside of those who were listening, touching a place that either quieted their thinking or brought them to tears. Ngaromoana loved it and is endlessly grateful to that aunt for allowing her this experience:

It is a genuine reflection of who and what we could truly be in terms of the way we vibrate our inner selves to the outside world. I am trying very hard to reach that place within myself and express it in my work.⁴⁶

The spiritual dimension is always present in the village. According to local history, the majestic Opoutama beach area (Fig. 1.2) is the physical resting place of the mauri of poutama which Ruawharo planted into the sands in the location where Bluebay is now. This act has inspired Ngaromoana's *Poutama Series* (2005-2006).⁴⁷ In order to facilitate an appreciation of the relevance of the ideas informing these particular works, I elaborate in some detail on the concept of poutama.

As a spiritual concept poutama is known to all iwi and has many different layers of interpretation and application.⁴⁸ Visual representations which vary largely in different iwi, are often found in the tukutuku (woven) panels of traditional meeting houses. In some tribal traditions poutama is referred to as the "Stairway to Heaven",

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ These paintings are part of a complex body of work, *Naked Sands*, which is discussed at great length in Chapter Two. It relates to the sale and subsequent subdivision of the Bluebay Camp grounds.

⁴⁸ 'Pou' meaning upright, while 'tama' is the male element, this concept is perhaps in a literal sense also connected to male rites of passage into adulthood, an important aspect to most indigenous cultures. To explore the full range and depth of poutama would exceed the framework of this thesis where the focus is on Ngaromoana's work. Therefore I can only address some aspects.

which relates to Tane Te Wananga and his ascent to the upper, the topmost heaven in a quest for superior knowledge. In a metaphorical sense poutama symbolizes different levels of learning and intellectual achievement or the striving for excellence in pursuit of fulfillment and accomplishment. In its extension the concept of poutama is today widely applied as a theory base in Maori business, health and education models and also in social work.

Ngaromoana's *Poutama* works vary in size, shape and style. Usually poutama is geometric; the pattern can be rotated, reflected and repeated. In her series the emphasis is on the escalating left to right movement, expressing direction, pursuit and seriousness. Vision, purpose, ancient symbols, pathways and destiny work their way across the canvas towards fulfillment and wholeness. With a palette of mainly red, white and black they convey a strong sense of rhythm and method. They show stairs, ladders, stepping stones and stars. Referencing the gardens of Opoutama, some of the paintings include trees. Painted waves represent the pattern lines of the tides upon the beach shore. Ngaromoana explains that the works challenge:

[the coordinates of] where we as a culture will go. The emphasis in my poutama is the vertical accent. The main elements are stairs, ladders with the upper realm being the stars. *Red* symbolizes the blood, the sacred duty, passion, heat and authority. *Black* is the unknown resting, skin, night, the sleeping fire, and people. *White* is the pure, white cloud. The works reach upward without compromise, challenging the horizon, with roots anchored deep within the body of Papatuanuku. The stare of these colours peer through the taniwha, on colour past and present.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Personal communication, October 2006



Figure 1.14



Figure 1.15

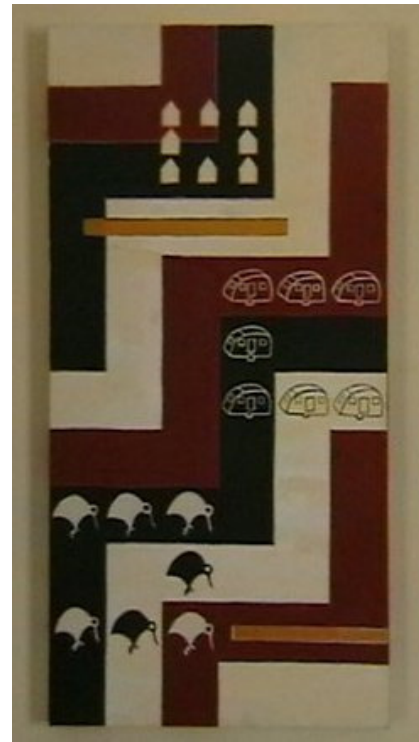


Figure 1.16

In *Poutama Pura Whetu* (Fig.1.14) the little red stones, found in the local creek and also called poutama, are connecting the Opoutama village to the skies represented by whetu, the stars. *Poutama Waka* (Fig.1.15) relates to the migrations of the ancestors, guided across the large Ocean of Kiwa by the stars. *Poutama Kiwi* (Fig.1.16) makes direct reference to the subdivision of the former Bluebay Campground that inspired the *Naked Sands...* project.

Ngaromoana's choice of colour here is in alignment with traditional painting conventions. Each colour used by Maori has its own significance and powerful association.

Kokowai or kura, red ochre, is a sacred colour. It is the substance, which according to Maori cosmology was created when Rangi, the sky-father, and Papatuanuku, the Earth-mother, were forcefully separated and their blood was spilt and mixed. Red paint was used as a sacred, tapu colour and associated with rank and mana.⁵⁰

The name of Papatuanuku's most fertile region, her pubic area, is *kurawaka*, therefore kura is of particular relevance to women. It is here that Tane found - upon the advice of his mother - the necessary female element, uha, to complement his maleness and create humanity. "Along with his brothers, Tane shaped Hineahuone from the red clay at Kurawaka and then breathed life into her".⁵¹

In some of her paintings from the *Poutama* series, such as Figures 1.17 and 1.18, Ngaromoana uses red as the basic colour and approaches the ascending theme of poutama in a looser, less structured fashion. These works display a free representation of individual patterns, such as poutama pororangi, found in tukutuku panels from different tribal areas on the East Coast.

⁵⁰ Roger Neich, *Painted Histories*, 1994, p. 24 "This association between red ochre and tapu rank and value becomes clear when one considers the range of meanings, figurative allusions and connotations for the word 'kura' (Williams 1957:157) From the basic meanings of red ochre, to paint red, to redden, red, glowing, the circle of denotations widens to red feathers and to cloaks ornamented with red feathers. Then, through the ancient Polynesian equation of red with value, 'kura' comes to mean precious, a treasure, a valued possession, and a chief or man of prowess. By further extension, 'kura' includes knowledge of ritual incantations and other sacred lore. At its greatest extension 'kura' becomes a ceremonial restriction or a tapu. The whare kura (literally red house) refers to the original school for the learning of sacred knowledge built in the mythical homeland of Hawaiki, and to all the later equivalent schools set up in New Zealand."

⁵¹ Mikaere, 2003, p.17.

(In this context see also S. Percy Smith, *Memoirs of the Polynesian Society, Vol. III, The Lore of the Whare Wananga*, 1913, Part I, pp.138-140. In this version Tane is guided to Kurawaka by the three gods, Ro-Iho, Ro-ake and Hae-puru.)

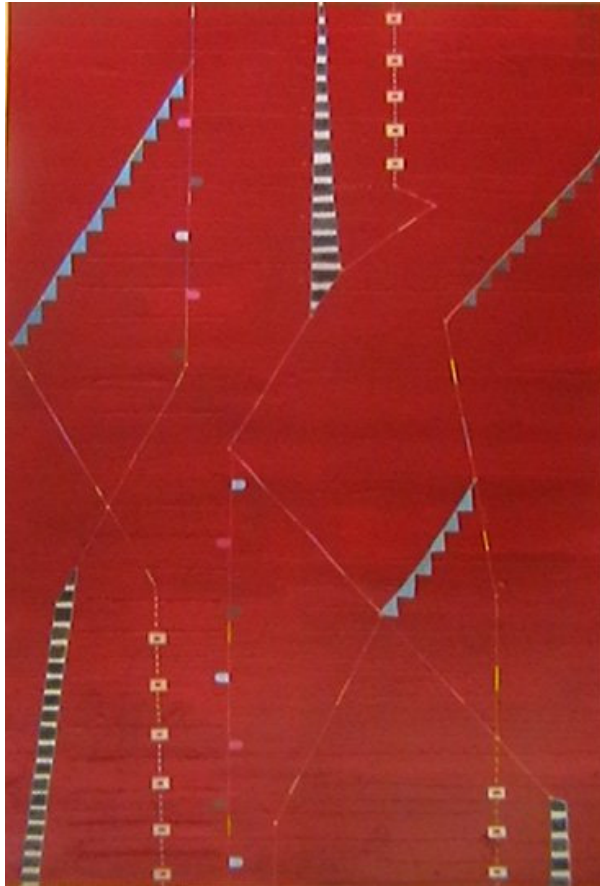


Figure 1.17

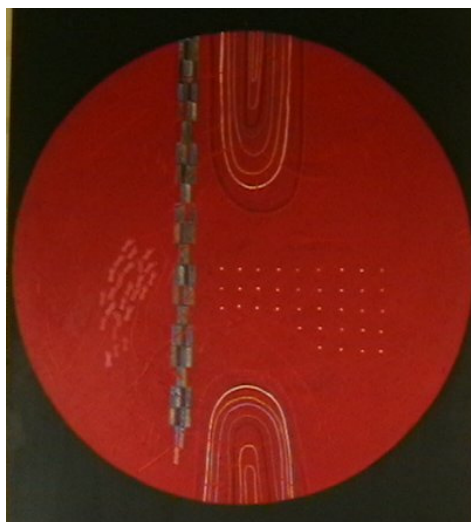


Figure 1.18



Figures 1.19, 1.20

In a series of round *Poutama* paintings (fig.1.19-1.23) red is applied to represent prosperity. These were produced by Ngaromoana with the intent of infusing Maori homes with positive poutama energy. Again different poutama patterns are used, and, in this instance, red is a dominant colour used to reference the connection with Asia.⁵² The artist considered a Feng Shui point of view in order to emphasize that favourable energies can be drawn upon, once the works are hung in specific places in the home. She explains: “While this may sound rather esoteric, prosperity and the way we achieve it, was actually a theme that ran through the whole issue of *Naked Sands*.”



Figures 1.21-1.23

⁵² Personal Communication, October 2006. Science traces the genetic makeup of Maori people back to South East Asia.

As a major part of the *Naked Sands ...* project the *Poutama Paintings* were exhibited at Ruawharo Marae in 2006. Ngaromoana's studio (Fig.1.24) is next to the marae and she feels a strong attachment to this meeting house. Opened by Apirana Ngata in 1927, it is the heart of the Opoutama community.⁵³



Figure 1.24

⁵³ Ranginui Walker, *Nga Tau Tohetohe, Years of Anger*, 1987, p.145, writes that: “by the time Ta Apirana Ngata, Ngati Porou, became Minister of Native Affairs in 1928, the occupation of the Maori people had basically become one of struggle and pure survival. Deeply worried about the welfare of his people he was one of the leaders instrumental in revitalizing a Maori cultural identity, he encouraged the revival of the traditional arts and crafts, especially carving and music. One of his points of focus was the development of marae, which he saw as the centre of community sentiment, ethnic identity and social pride. He traveled in mostly those North Island tribal areas with a high Maori population such as Te Tai Tokerau, the Waikato and Te Tai Rawhiti regions to share his dreams and visions.” As a consequence many marae were established on the East Coast including Ruawharo Marae, Ngaromoana's home marae, which plays a central role in her life and that of the community.

Over the past few years Ngaromoana and other members of the arts community have been using Ruawharo Marae as a gallery space for exhibitions, with commissions on sales going back to the marae. At times there have been tangi held at the same time as the exhibitions, which Ngaromoana says was quite comfortable and “worked really well.” Sandy Adsett notes: “the walls of the early whare were used as the gallery, where stories of the hapu were expressed in painted designs and fibre art.”⁵⁴ Ngaromoana and the local arts community are, it appears, quite in line with the tradition.



Figure 1.25 *Painted Rafters; (detail) Veranda of Ruawharo Marae, Opoutama*

On the weekends and during holidays the marae is open to the public. Every Saturday morning women from the village gather to make and sell arts and crafts on the veranda, which was painted by Ngaromoana in 2002 (Fig.1.25). They share

⁵⁴ In *Whenua, born of the land*, exh.cat., 2004, p. 16.

morning tea, maybe practice a few songs, chat, discuss their families and their environment and enjoy the visitors.

Since returning to the village in 1996, Ngaromoana has been actively involved in the community and considers it her privilege that she has been able to give back through her art. Given that a large part of her work is aimed at social change through creativity, she runs community classes and offers art workshops for young mothers through Te Hau Ora o Te Wheke a Nuku, a Rongomaiwahine health service. As a further contribution to the local community, she painted the Opoutama School mural for the Home and School Committee in 2003. She also facilitates workshops for teachers and guides bush-walks on a regular basis.

Ngaromoana was instrumental in establishing and organizing “*Gifted Sands*” (Fig. 1.26) the discussion of which brings this chapter to its conclusion. As an annual hapu and iwi based art exhibition, this event was inspired by the arrival of the ancestor Ruawharo in the Opoutama area. Reminding us of the sacred gifts he had brought with him from Hawaiki and planted on the local foreshore, this exhibition has now been held for the last 10 years. In 2002 the artist held a promotional workshop in order to further develop the commercial aspect of “*Gifted Sands*”. The importance of this annual show cannot be over emphasized. As a link between local artists and the wider community it now serves as a regular sales outlet, and, summer after summer, continues to attract hundreds of visitors to this special and culturally significant village. Giving back to the community, embracing the village and telling its stories are all aspects of Ngaromoana’s position as an indigenous village artist.

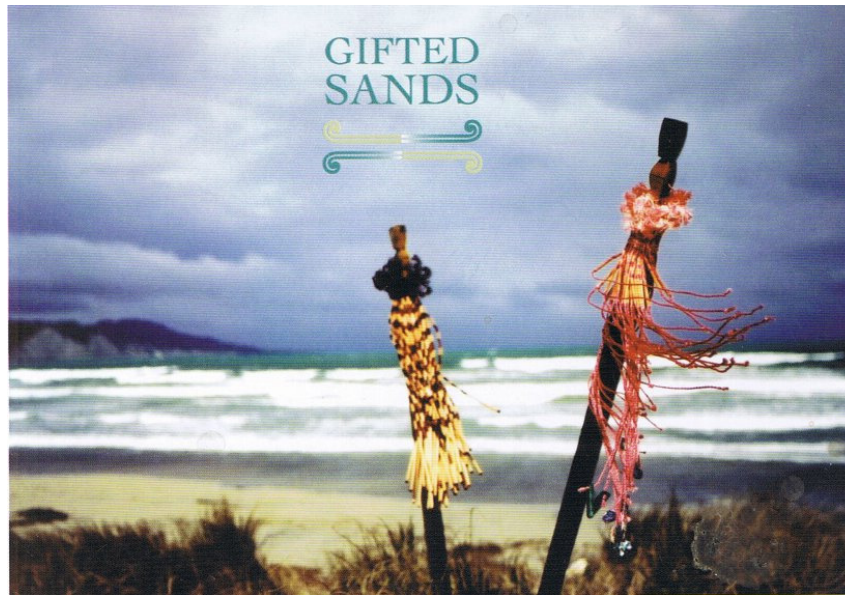


Figure 1.26

The introduction of artist Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana has been at the heart of this chapter and I have set out to explore her notion of an indigenous, village based art. The complex connections between the history of the Opoutama village environment and Ngaromoana's artistic practice have begun to unfold. In the process of relating some of the stories surrounding the sacred Takitimu waka and the deeds of her ancestors Ruawaro, Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu, an impression of the significance of the area within the context of Te Ao Maori could be gained. It has, indeed, been confirmed that the Opoutama village environment is not empty but is, instead "full of knowledge, full of story, full of goodness, full of energy, and full of power".

The artist's indigeneity to her papakainga village Opoutama has been explored through her whakapapa. I have highlighted how upon this indigenous base

Ngaromoana builds her life and how from this base her art is informed. Her status as a village artist is emphasized by her practical and spiritual engagement with the area. Furthermore, I have shown that by choosing to address issues of conservation, sustainability and community development Ngaromoana proves herself to be connected to Opoutama in addition to and beyond genealogical ties.

In this chapter, the exploration of some of her artworks and their underlying concept has revealed that Ngaromoana Raureti Tomoana is, indeed, a visual story teller of great skill. While these stories are steeped in local lore and culturally significant, her visual interpretations - just like the concepts themselves - transcend the confines of village and of Te Ao Maori. To the open minded, attentive viewer they allow insights into ideas of universal relevance. As a consequence Ngaromoana's work imbues the term 'village art' with an extended meaning.

Chapter Two

One image is imprinted indelibly in my mind – an image of almost ten years ago when feminism was a fresh force raging in my spirit. Traveling up the island, enjoying the voluptuously feminine shapes, the alluring contours and creases of the landscape, I suddenly encountered a scene of abysmal ugliness and grief. The leaking, stark clay scars of a formerly green and forested hillside, red soil exposed like bleeding viscera across a gaping jagged, gash of earth; singed and blackened tree stumps protruding helplessly from crusty slag piles; moisture rising dimly from the churned uneven ground. And everywhere machines and noise and men. Obscenity-carnage-rape. Rape. I suddenly realized. That is what is happening to our world: to Aotearoa. By male greed, for male power and male gratification.⁵⁵

This image imprinted in Ngahuia Te Awekotuku's mind creates a direct link to a situation Ngaromoana was faced with a few years ago. At that time a potential subdivision on the Opoutama beach frontage caused much grief for the local people and great disruption within the village environment. For over two years the artist and her community were engaged in a struggle to halt this development. While they were unable to do so, that stressful process inspired Ngaromoana to produce *Naked Sands* (2005 – 2006), which is the focus of this chapter. *Naked Sands* consists of six individual components, the *Occupation*, *Ahi Kaa*, the *Poutama* works, the *Submission* or *Wahi Tapu Paintings*, the *Caravan* and *Whakapohane*. This ambitious project was motivated by local politics and challenges the resource consent process. As an overall framework it reflects the artist's protest against the inappropriate development of wahi tapu within the Opoutama village area that are significant to tangata whenua. However, in exploring *Naked Sands* it will become

⁵⁵ Te Awekotuku, 1991, p.7.

apparent that it also addresses land issues and grievances – issues Maori have been dealing with since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Because of its political charge I also examine this project within the context of Maori political art.

The *Occupation*, of the Opoutama beach front by Ngaromoana and a group of locals and supporters took place over several weeks. As the most obviously political segment of *Naked Sands* it is reminiscent of protest actions such as Bastian Point.⁵⁶ The *Occupation* received a great deal of public attention and was widely covered in the national media. While discussing this event, I highlight the relationship Maori traditionally had with the land. On the basis of mythological and historical accounts and drawing on writers such as Te Awekotuku, the concept of mana whenua is explored. In order to assert mana whenua the protesters kept a fire burning throughout the occupation process. *Ahi Kaa*, this burning of the home fires, represents the customary practice of emphasizing occupational rights to land. The custom was reenacted by Ngaromoana in the process of the beachfront occupation and the fire was later buried. A circle of painted and decorated red stones was created as a physical symbol of this ritual. An in depth discussion of *Ahi Kaa* will once again elucidate Ngaromoana's relationship with the Opoutama environment as well as confirm the living connection with Ruawharo and his ritual acts of planting mauri. In the process of super imposing an ancient customary practice onto a

⁵⁶ In January 1977 the Orakei Action Group began an occupation of land at Bastion Point in Auckland, in order to prevent a subdivision. This occupation lasted for 506 days, until it was ended by police force. Walker here also draws attention to actions by the Crown against Rua Kenana, Te Whiti and Te Kooti. Ranginui Walker, 2004, p. 218.

current situation and presenting its political content in artistic form, Ngaromoana reveals and asserts another aspect of her position as an indigenous village artist.

I have discussed the *Poutama Paintings* as one section of *Naked Sands* in the previous chapter. Another element, the *Submission* or *Wahi Tapu* works draw attention to significant sites within the Opoutama environment. These paintings, too, represent the idea of poutama, in that this ‘ascending path’ or ‘stairway’ can be identified in the layout of the land. Within an integral system, starting at sea level and reaching up to the skies and beyond, one geological step relies on the previous one for support. Rather than *writing* more fruitless submissions to this effect, Ngaromoana set out to *paint* images to convey her messages. In analyzing poutama within the context of the *Wahi Tapu* paintings, it becomes evident, how important it is to approach any development of land with utmost care and from an environmentally and spiritually holistic viewpoint.

During the occupation *The Caravan* had provided shelter for the protesters. It was afterwards done up by Ngaromoana to serve as a mobile monument of the so-called democratic process of political participation, or, perhaps more bluntly, as a reminder of the blatant abuse of people’s time and resources. A discussion of this work shows how questionable the nature of the submission process is. Likewise, and in no uncertain terms, the performance of *Whakapohane* is a final symbolic act of protest expressing Ngaromoana’s disillusionment with the situation. In total, *Naked Sands* comprised more than 60 art works, all of which were on display at

Ruawharo Marae for several weeks in 2006. The analysis of this project emphasizes the political aspect of her work. It becomes apparent that, as a village artist, Ngaromoana's artistic production makes an important contribution to contemporary Maori political art and should be acknowledged as such.

The *Occupation* of the Opoutama beachfront (Fig. 2.1 - 2.3) took place in August and September 2005. News of the sale of the local Bluebay Camping Ground to a property developer, who now wanted to subdivide the land, had so incensed members and supporters of the local community that they created a resistance movement. Consequently Ngaromoana and others took up residence on the local foreshore to demonstrate their opposition. Artistic activities were present throughout the occupation and many driftwood and stone sculptures were created by occupants and visitors from materials found on the beach (Fig. 2.1).



Figure 2.1

The occupation lasted seven weeks, which was long enough to see the dispute featured in the national media.⁵⁷ Ngaromoana relates:

The occupation area was just in front of the road reserve, just in front of the plantation reserve, just in front of the Bluebay Resort Subdivision. The Seabed Foreshore Legislation stripped our rights from the high tide mark and for us the fear of losing our rights to our beach and way of life was in our face. Through legislature in parliament and the courts the sand was disappearing from beneath our feet. The worst case scenario imagined was that we would become the spectators of strangers with floating bars and mussel farms, and go to the supermarket to buy kaimoana.⁵⁸



Figure 2.2

⁵⁷ The *Occupation* also inspired a Documentary Feature: *The Last Resort*, by Errol Wrigh and Abi King-Jones. This film criticizes the country's real estate practices, and identifies government legislation as supporting one of the world's most liberal overseas investment regimes. "This is 21 century New Zealand where land wars still rage, treasured Kiwi pastimes are slipping into oblivion and 'colonisation by corporation' leaves citizens tenants in their own homes." (quoted from Synopsis of video.)

⁵⁸ Personal communication, October 2006.



Figure 2.3

The land in question was loved and enjoyed as the classic, iconic Kiwi camping ground by several generations of happy holidaymakers. Initially gifted by local iwi to the Crown in the late 1800s as a public park, it was formally established as a camping ground in the 1960s. Later the grounds were commercialized into a motor camp and extended to 13 acres of reserve. The motor camp was eventually leased out to a manager who then bought this parcel of public land for an alleged \$50,000 from Landcorp⁵⁹ in 2001. The manager is said to have sold it shortly after for \$1.2m to a group of developers that included himself. This happened without the knowledge of the local community and in spite of a Treaty Claim (Sec.28

⁵⁹ The sale of state owned enterprises into private hands began in the mid-1980s during the years when Roger Douglas was Minister of Finance in a Labour lead government under David Lange. Landcorp was set up by the government as a commercial entity to oversee and action the sales of land, and other state-owned enterprises such as railways and power companies - a function which it still performs today with the sale of public reserves as surplus to requirement. Often leasees have become owners. Huge assets, including High Country Stations in the South Island, have been sold in this way.

memorial)⁶⁰ lodged against the title of the land, indicating that it was in dispute.

Subsequently the developers submitted to the local Wairoa District Council, as the relevant body, a subdivision proposal for this parcel of land to be divided into 42 sections. At this stage the matter became public and was brought to the attention of tangata whenua.⁶¹

Ngaromoana was very worried. There was a general fear that the village was going to change forever and while that change might be advantageous for some, it could prove extremely detrimental to the wellbeing of others:

All inadequacies of Maori culture were brought into light and exposed. Idiosyncrasies, contradictory positions, contradiction of aspirations, vulnerabilities, questions of worthiness and authenticity raised their heads like a many headed taniwha. For many of us in the village, this area was special: healing, a sanctuary, a retreat, a whanau with unlocked doors, children growing up in each others houses, where the marae was still the focus of social life. We were often accused of living in the past or having our heads buried in the sand, this being particularly offensive as most of our urupa around Mahia are in the sand on the beach fronts.⁶²

Cultural and social problems were expected, given that these new sections would be very expensive and therefore aimed at buyers with money but most likely without any connection to the area. Great concerns relating to Treaty of Waitangi principles were also expressed in the many cultural audits and reports. While certain aspects

⁶⁰ The Waitangi Tribunal was established by an Act of Parliament in 1975. At that time protests about unresolved Treaty grievances were growing and a legal process needed to be set up by which Māori claims of land confiscation and loss could be investigated. There is a long history in New Zealand of Māori protest over instances where the Treaty of Waitangi was not observed. Section 28 became a kind of caveat notifying people that there was a claim on the land title and said lands may have to be returned to the original owners. Over the years Section 28 has been ignored as in the case of Blue Bay.

⁶¹ This background information was given to me by Ngaromoana, October 2006.

⁶² Ibid.

of the subdivision proposal were seemingly progressive, such as the planting of native trees, the inclusion of art works and an overall attractive well designed layout, there were grave concerns within the community that waste disposal might damage the wetlands, waterways and beach front areas. Where there had been unrestricted, wide open space, there would now be an exclusive enclosure. Tangata whenua were worried that the costs for additional infrastructure, roading, water and power supplies would affect their rate payments.

Confronted with this project, the members of the local community assessed their prospects and their positions. Some were torn between the promise of short term employment that seemed beneficial and the rather glum long-term prospects. Everybody reassessed their beliefs about ownership of land: this particular piece of land that had been open to everyone now belonged to private developers. It was no longer available for a community – the subdivision was designed for a wealthy clientele and their use. The sub-division equaled division. Negative energies and conflicts arose within the community as well as with the developers.

Detailed submissions were written against the subdivision proposal during the resource consent or “consultation” process, which Ngaromoana perceived as a “con” and an “insult”. She says:

The Wairoa District Council hearings were *performance art* at its worst. Nothing made sense, lawyer talked to lawyer, bureaucrats to bureaucrats. A so called matakite [seer] who worked for the developers, talked as if he was Ruawharo himself. He forgot that Ruawharo lives in all of us in the village.

Matakite who live in Wellington, have no more mana than we who live here in Opoutama, the village. Maori liaison workers and Maori representatives for District Council talked about the constraints of working for Wairoa District Council. Maori was turned against Maori, maybe those “with” and those “without”, Maori iwi fighting with other iwi, marae standing against marae. Not only the roads got covered in tar, we all got hurt in some way.⁶³

As a consequence of the resistance people in the village were slandered. Residents opposing the development were described as “uneducated trouble makers”, “low socio”, “surf bums” and “artists”.⁶⁴ They were quickly turned into second class citizens. Even worse, arguments became common and sexism or male chauvinism also surfaced. According to Ngaromoana emotions became so heated that women were advised to go home and concern themselves with activities such as cleaning and cooking. As a consequence men and women gathered separately and found it difficult to talk to each other. The situation became very stressful for everybody involved. While the people of Opoutama saw themselves confronted with issues that concerned their immediate lifestyles and perhaps their economic base, the issues underlying this conflict are to be seen in customary land use and tikanga Maori (code of law, custom and practice). A detailed discussion of mana whenua and the intimate, symbiotic relationship Maori traditionally had with the land will help to elucidate why emotions ran so high within the community.

Regulated by tapu and based on tikanga Maori and whakapapa, the relationship between Maori and their immediate environment was a living, intimate one. In its extension whakapapa must be seen as a holistic, all encompassing concept by which

⁶³ Personal communication, September 2006.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

the whanaungatanga (family ties, interconnectedness) of all living things is established. Through whakapapa Maori are directly linked *to* the land. Genealogically they are an issue *of* the land and he uri o Papatuanuku, descendant of the Earth Mother.⁶⁵ This integral relationship between Maori and the land is deeply rooted in mythology and tradition. Papatuanuku, the earth was perceived as a mother. She is the mother of the creator gods and she is the mother of humanity. Her children gave birth to plants, birds, animals and fish for human sustenance. Whenua - the land - is her body. Therefore, her mana is paramount. Without her nothing exists and nothing can be sustained. The aphorism “Toitu he whenua, whatungarongaro he tangata” (man perishes but land remains), encapsulates the eternal nature of the Earth in relation to man’s brief life span.

These deep seated feelings of Maori attachment to land encompass both a spiritual and physical connection that reaches back to and includes the ancestral voyages of discovery and the subsequent earliest settlement in the new lands. Walker provides further understanding:

That sentiment was amplified by traditions of generations of occupation of dwelling places, tilling of garden lands and fighting to defend them against others. Tribal wars served to demarcate boundaries. The bones of buried ancestors, and blood spilt in the defense of territory, hallowed the land as a gift from the ancestors to their descendants and future generations. Each generation was bonded to the land at birth by the custom of planting the afterbirth, also known as whenua, in the land. When a child’s pito (umbilical cord was cut and buried with the afterbirth in the land, it was known as iho whenua. The iho is the core, the centre portion of the cord which is between the child and the whenua, symbolizing the connection to the land. The iho whenua of a child of rank was marked by the planting of a tree. The tree was named as the iho

⁶⁵ *Mataora*, p.86.

whenua of that child and signified ownership as well as connection to the land. The iho whenua was cited in any disputes over territory.⁶⁶

When people die, they are believed to return to Papatuanuku, where they are met by the ancestress Hinenuitepo, the Goddess of the underworld.⁶⁷ Obviously, for women, who in the birthing process also negotiate the states of life and death, the connection is particularly strong: in Maori mythology Hineahuone, the first woman, was sculpted by Tane and his brothers from the red earth at Kurawaka, the pubic area of Papatuanuku. Te Awekotuku emphasizes:

the Maori believes that the earth is the elemental womb to which we must all return, folded within her, carefully placed, bones complete the cycle; for as she gives, so does she receive. And female in essence, she moves within the consciousness of many women.⁶⁸

Therefore, to Robert Jahnke and Witi Ihimaera it comes as no surprise that “women artists, in particular, should embrace Te Whenua, the land, as one of their major themes of expression.”⁶⁹

In light of this analysis it has become apparent why emotions could become so heated within the Opoutama community and why Ngaromoana could not simply stand by and allow things to happen. That subdivision was to be created in an area of great cultural significance. Not only were Ruawharo’s gifts buried in the sands, but also ancestors, pito and whenua. In addition, the natural structure of the land itself was going to be disrupted. Maori have dealt with grievances concerning their

⁶⁶ Ranginui Walker, *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou*, 2004, p.70.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Te Awekotuku, 1991, p.70.

⁶⁹ *Mataora*, p.86.

land since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840. With the renaissance of Maori culture from about the mid 1970s many Maori artists working in various genres have, through their art, engaged in the political struggles of their people, also empathizing with the global community. Protest through art or art as political comment have become powerful tools. Therefore Ngaromona's political engagement sits well within the context of Maori political art.⁷⁰

Spurred on by the Springbok Tour,⁷¹ the 1980s in particular developed into a decade of active political artistic articulation in Aotearoa New Zealand. Like many other Maori artists Ngaromoana participated in the 1981 Springbok Tour protests,

⁷⁰ To name but a few artists in this context: **Ralph Hotere**, has produced politically inspired works for several decades. In 1981 Hotere painted the *Black Union Jack* series in protest against the Springbok Tour, while in *The London* series of 1988 he offers a subversive view of New Zealand's British Empire origins. In 1988 he also created a print *Biko* in memory of the South African.. In 1981 **Emare Karaka** painted *Black Avenger of Prey*, and *Race Relations Triptych* in 1988, both are connected to the 'Tour'. However, Karaka's politics, like that of many Maori artists, did not stop there. She also describes her work as centred around the Treaty of Waitangi, and: "to do with rangatiratanga, our atua, our taonga, and rights, living rights, arts and cultural rights". In 1987 she was accused by MP Ross Meurant of being a terrorist attempting to overthrow the New Zealand Government. Karaka responded: "I am armed with a paintbrush. If that is regarded as terrorism, then I am a terrorist. My artwork is my platform." [sic] My work is my patu" [sic]. Witi Ihimaera, *Emily Karaka waharoa o ngai tai*, 1997, exh.cat. **Robyn Kahukiwa**'s primary goal has been to communicate with Maori as a Maori artist, and she has targeted a mainly Maori audience with the mass production of her art in books and on posters. However, as art historian Jonathan Mane – Wheoki argues: "There is a necessary connection between her art and Maori politics, and she has been a significant artistic contributor to the resurgence of Maori nationalism and culture". Jonathan Mane-Wheoki, Robyn Kahukiwa: My Ancestors Are With Me Always in *Art New Zealand*, 75, Winter 1995.

⁷¹ For the first time in 16 years the NZ Football Association had invited the South African Springbok Rugby Team to tour NZ. The first game was to be played in Auckland on 12 September, 1981, which incidentally was also the 4th anniversary of the death of Steven Biko, a native South African political leader and social worker. Biko had sustained severe head trauma during a police interrogation and died of neurological injury in a cell of the Pretoria Central Prison a few days later, on 12 September 1977. "Stop The Tour" demonstrations took place all over New Zealand, particularly in cities with a large Maori population. Lead by anti-apartheid groups Pakeha and Maori communities identified passionately with the sufferings of first nation South Africans. Civil unrest reached previously unknown, frightening dimensions. The film documentary *Patu* [1983] by Merata Mita conveys images of violent and bloody clashes between police and demonstrators.

and has continued to engage in political activities of some sort throughout her adult life. After studying Political Science, Sociology and Maori Studies at Canterbury and Waikato Universities between 1977 and 1979, she transferred to Auckland, where she joined the Maori Peoples' Liberation Movement. She became a member of the Polynesian Peoples' Anti Nuclear Committee and the Women's Group Hine Tu Kaha. She used her artistic talents in the form of graphics, T-shirt, flag and pamphlet design, to contribute to the cause. She also worked as a visual artist for Black Katz, a women's music collective, working with women in need through multi media. In 1981 Ngaromoana was the Maori representative at the United Nations World Council of Indigenous Peoples in Switzerland.

On the basis of her political conscience, as tangata whenua and as the village artist, Ngaromoana feels responsible for safeguarding the land and protecting its mana, a concept that is in itself highly political. Therefore, she is quite in agreement with painter Selwyn Muru who said: "Most of us started off painting pretty pictures, lovely landscapes, [but] as time goes on we realize the situation of our own people politically, and then we start using the brush as a weapon."⁷² However, being a person of quiet rhetoric, Ngaromoana is more comfortable using her paint brush as a *tool* with which to tell her stories.

⁷² Selwyn Muru, on the video showing the events that lead to the *Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake* exhibition held at the National Art Gallery from December 1990 to March 1991.



Figure 2.4

Ahi Kaa is another such story she told within *Naked Sands*. This old custom of burning a ritual fire was reenacted and a ceremonial fire was kept burning throughout the occupation of the Opoutama foreshore (Fig. 2.4). Ngaromoana remembers:

During the occupation we had a fire going all the time. On one of the evenings, accompanied by *karakia*, we built another fire inside our dwelling, and with just the embers going and no smoke rising, we all slept around it. In the morning the fire was buried. This ritual is an ancient way of marking land boundaries. We hope in 50 years time this fire will be uncovered and the story of how it came to be there will be told by our descendents.⁷³

This burying of the fire is connected to the old ritualistic performance of *uruuruwhenua* (*whakauruwhenua*). Customarily practiced, *uruuruwhenua* involved

⁷³ Personal communication, September 2006.

ceremonies including karakia (prayer, incantation) and the placing of objects into the ground for the purpose of acquiring or preserving title to lands.⁷⁴ Thus the messages Ngaromoana and the other occupants sent to the developers were clear: *This land is not empty. This land is occupied. We have been looking after it and we have been keeping it warm. We are here. We have been here for a long, long time!*

From this came Ngaromoana's *Ahi Kaa* work. In art – as in story telling – there are often deeper layers of meaning, hidden from the superficial glance, only to be revealed by chance, or, perhaps, to those who take the time to look more closely and to enquire. *Ahi Kaa* (Fig. 2.5) is one such work, where if layers are peeled back, hidden significance becomes apparent. Ngaromoana used sandstones from the local creek. Lovely and rounded, of a similar size, they were initially painted white. Customarily white stones were used to designate and protect tapu in places, such as graves on burial grounds. Marking physical or spiritual boundaries, they can still be seen around peoples' properties. Ngaromoana's white stones were then given a coat of papier-mâché. In this instance the artist ripped up newspaper and glued it onto the white stones, with the intention of painting them later. She used only those newspaper pages that advertised property, and confirmed to me that she did so intentionally.⁷⁵ The advertisements conveyed strong messages like:

Build Your Dream! Absolute Beach Front! Only A Few Sections Left – starting at \$280,000” and: Buy Your Dream Home! Unobstructed Sea Views! Be Quick! Asking Price: \$1,200,000.

⁷⁴ H.W. Williams, *Dictionary of the Maori Language*, 1992, p.470.

⁷⁵ I happened to be visiting when Ngaromoana worked on *Ahi Kaa*.

In order to create a connection with hangi (earth oven) stones Ngaromoana later painted these stones red.⁷⁶ Once they had been decorated and waxed they were arranged in a circle. Reminiscent of the rites implemented by Ruawharo, when he first arrived in the area, *Ahi Kaa* revives the ancient Maori ritual connected with possession and custodianship of land. As a powerful response to the challenge of the subdivision, it renews at the same time that symbiotic umbilical connection with the land, which, once performed can never be severed. By shredding those property advertisements and making them part of a strong artistic and political statement, Ngaromoana entirely dismisses the idea of the land as a saleable commodity. Furthermore, in applying the colour red - kura - onto these stones, she gives back to Papatuanuku what is hers. Through customary rite Ngaromoana asserts her status as village artist. Laying claim on the Bluebay area she leaves no doubt about her position with regards to mana whenua.



Figure 2.5

⁷⁶ Stones that are frequently heated in the fire usually develop a permanently reddish colour.

To further support this position she subsequently created the *Wahi Tapu* series in support of her written submissions against the subdivision. This, she felt, would be another way of conveying her message and also perhaps a more durable statement. At that time she was still hopeful that those opposed to the development would win: the subdivision would not go ahead, consent would not be granted but instead common sense would prevail. The paintings comprising this series are a small A4 format and executed in acrylics on board with a golden sand border. Reflecting her optimism, they are happy, warm, colourful and fun. Alluding to religious icons, the works do, indeed, have that quality about them. There is an element of innocence present that speaks to the heart and reminds us of religious folk art.

The series displays the habitats or significant sites belonging to Ngai Tama, Ruawharo Marae and again tell local stories. In this series Ngaromoana often used the orb or egg shape to represent the sea, which within the formation of the land, appears to create two half round shapes between Opoutama and Mahanga. In order to give universality to the submissions, she simultaneously draws upon the idea of primordial waters from where all things come, as well as the potential hidden in that orb or egg shape. The golden sand border around the sides speaks again of Ruawharo and references the sacredness of the sand of the area, reconnecting the paintings back to the village. The white background is meant to symbolize Aotearoa, the long white cloud, and also to convey a certain sense of purity.

Ngaromoana explains:

It's really about being fair – and also understanding wahi tapu. All the work that people put in, there were 28 submissions against the subdivision, and those were actually quite substantial. None were for it, and yet it went ahead. That submission process was unfair; they were using their power to sway the decision. Basically, I was actually quite disillusioned with the process and I thought that the development was going to happen anyway, that the outcome was preconceived. So I decided to put energy into these paintings because they are going to last longer and they also convey the messages strongly.⁷⁷

A bright yellow submarine (Fig.2.6) can be seen floating happily in the sky above a small mission house with the Christian symbol of the cross on its roof, and WDC, Wairoa District Council, inscribed above the doorway. This painting alludes to Council as having “that mission kind of status: that they are there to help you!”⁷⁸ A small mango pare (hammerhead shark) is going through or standing in the gateway. Ngaromoana felt that as a hapu, as Maori, they were really banging their heads against the doorway:

That's what that particular little icon represents. And as to the yellow submarine: I was playing around with the idea of sub-missions, and this was like a mission house, and the submarine was sort of like “everything was under” – but at the same time we were also really ‘high’, almost intoxicated with the whole process and also high with hopes that the miraculous might happen and it would all just go away – which it did not. Of course, there is also the connection to the Beatles’ song: “*We all live in a yellow submarine*”...⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Personal communication, September 2006.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.



Figure 2.6



Figure 2.7

Another work (Fig. 2.7) compares the New Brighton of 1925 - at that time an idyllic little Christchurch suburb by the sea - with Opoutama village, which today faces that same type of development. Here the Crown takes the place of the District Council.

Some paintings of the *Wahi Tapu Series* must be understood as also representing the concept of poutama, referring in this instant to the structure underlying the actual landscape. Starting at the bottom of the sea, each of the different geological levels is seemingly independent but yet - like the steps of a stairway - supporting the ones following. Therefore they all fulfill a unique function within that living organism of whenua, the land. In these works Ngaromoana is once again telling the stories of Opoutama, this time conveying an idea of the interconnectedness of all the individual elements that make up the whole. She likens the different levels to

individual gardens and conjures up memories of a pristine Garden of Eden. Figure 2.8 represents the complete landscape poutama showing the different levels from the sea upwards, via the swamps or wetlands, across the man-made gardens, up into the bush and into the clouds and beyond.

The lower-most step or first garden is formed by the seabed as well as the seashore. Ngaromoana utilizes a fine brush to emphasize the different geological layers, and again uses dots to identify the sandy areas. This is where pupu (mollusc), kutai (mussel), paua (abalone), kina (sea-egg), crabs and certain fish live. This is their home. They are kai moana (sea food) and they provide for the village. Trees are observed for seasonal change and the local people know, “when the kowhai is flowering, the kina are fat.”⁸⁰



Figure 2.8

⁸⁰ Personal communication, September 2006.

Numerous birds come to feed (Fig. 2.9). While this area is the seafood cupboard, kapata kai moana, it is also a place of healing. Weavers come to the beach-line and collect pingao, a golden coloured grass, to use in their work.



Figure 2.9



Figure 2.10

In Figure 2.10 Ngaromoana highlights some of the different shellfish of the Opoutama beach. Mussels and paua, precious to the local iwi, are found on the rocks that edge the sea, while kina are gathered from the shoreline. Ngaromoana asserts the importance of these assets to herself and the people in the village:

They sustain us and we have a relationship with them. It was about letting the council know that the area is wahi tapu. I wanted all the paintings to show what was so significant about the area and why this subdivision was going to impact on the mussels, on the paua and on the kina there: through overuse, through pollution, through creating an imbalance.⁸¹

⁸¹ Personal communication, September 2006.

The next garden: ngutu awa – the river mouth or the estuary is depicted in Figure 2.11. This very significant area is the habitat of birds, eels, and other fish. The creek creates a waterway from the sea to the lagoon. Whitebait swim upwards from the sea and also cockabullies and flounders and vice versa, driftwood and trees come down towards the sea. Weaving materials like kuta (tall grass-like plants) and different types of harakeke (flaxes) grow in this wetland area.



Figure 2.11

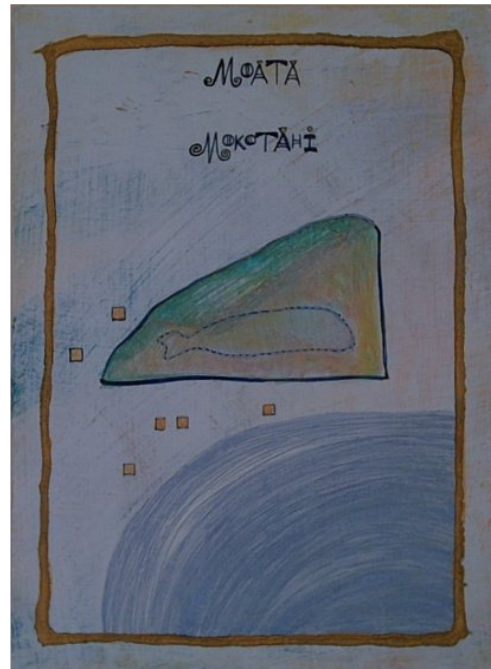


Figure 2.12

Te Ara Paikea (Fig. 2.12), named after an ancient pathway, shows the hill at the crossroads, which used to be a burial ground for chiefs. Initially it had the shape of a female whale, but when the road was put in, the tail got knocked off. At the time of Ruawharo, this lagoon was joined to Mahia beach. It was swampy with a narrow spit that whales would trail through. Today this old pathway has dried up.

The third step of the landscape poutama is formed by the cultivated areas and man made gardens: the papakainga mara (village gardens). Kumara (sweet potato), riwai (potato), kanga (corn), taro (plant from the yam family) and other vegetable, fruit and flowers are grown on this level. This area is usually occupied by tangata whenua.

At the bush line of the uppermost level (Fig. 2.13) we are greeted by Tane Mahuta, God of the forests. Here pikopiko (edible fern), Karaka and native fire trees, such as Kaimako, Mahoe and Makomako grow, as well as rongoa (medicinal) trees like Kawakawa and Manuka. The colour trees Tawa and Tutu, the berries of which carry a purple pigment used to make dyes for weaving materials, are also found here. This is where Puriri grow and Tanekaha, the barks of which produce a yellow and rusty red colour when boiled. This poutama step is also the home of weaving shrubs like Kei Kei (pandanus) or the construction trees: Totora for houses and waka, Whau trees used for floats on fishing nets, Manuka and Supple Jack for crayfish pots and eel traps. At the same time, this uppermost garden is the residence of many different types of birds, insects and also home to pigs, rats and many other species of animals. The bush also conditions the water supply. In Opoutama the village supply is fed by a spring located up in the bush.



Figure 2.13

In these *Wahi Tapu/Naked Sands* works Ngaromoana again reinforces mana whenua, the supreme importance of the land. At the same time these poutama - landscape paintings give evidence about her own relationship with the Opoutama village. As the village artist she understands the Opoutama landscape as an integral organism where everything is connected to, and depends on everything else. Step by step she leads us upwards on this poutama from one level to the next, until, of course, we reach the clouds, which in turn provide the rain. Ngaromoana's Opoutama landscape is a stairway to the cosmos that begins at the deep-sea level and reaches up to the celestial. She adds:

The individual gardens also have their own guardians: Tangaroa, the God of the Oceans and Hine Moana, the Goddess of the Waves upon the Shoreline, Hine One, the Sand Maiden, Haumiatiketike and Rongomaraeroa, Gods of the Vegetable and Cultivated Gardens and Tane Mahuta. Altogether they represent the integral, intact and living landscape around tangata whenua. And again there is the question: how will this subdivision impact on these relationships?

Any interference on any level without consideration of the subtle and delicate albeit very real interrelations, will severely impact on the stability and wellbeing of the whole, the land as well as its residents. The responsibilities and liberties to keep that poutama strong and intact lie with the people: those who live there, those who holiday there and above all those who are entrusted with making the laws and decisions that apply to resource management. Frequently decision makers are either ignorant of or oblivious to the implications of their consents. More often than not, these are granted against the wishes, interventions and better knowledge of the people who live in the area, know the land and are in tune with it. Generally the basis for resource consent is profitability or feasibility, which usually focuses on quick, short term gains for only a few, who often don't even live in the area, and equals long term losses for those who do.

Apart from environmental and practical aspects there is an important spiritual dimension connected to the Bluebay subdivision, which is of great significance to Ngaromoana. According to the cultural advisor for the subdivision, Section 19 of the site in question is said to hold female energy. The symbolism reiterates once more the connection between women and the land and relates to the contractions of the uterus or the opening of the vagina, when a woman gives birth.

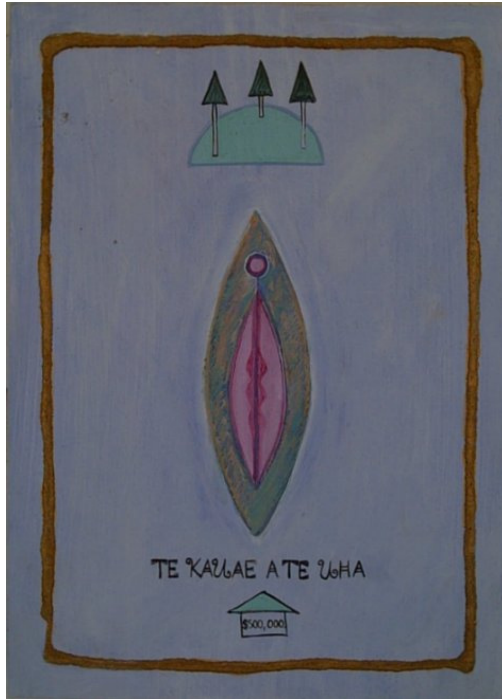


Figure 2.14

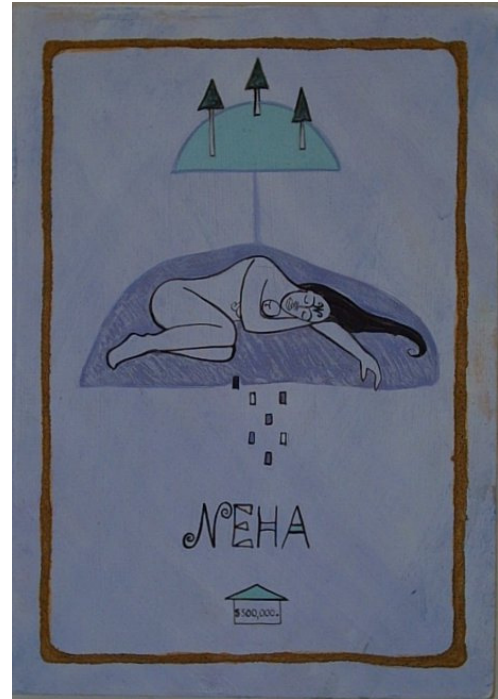


Figure 2.15

Ngaromonana tells about this in the image *Te Kauae a te Uha* (Fig.2.14). She says:

I am still apprehensive or suspicious of this information: when you get males talking about female sites – well parts sound like common sense, when you talk contractions, then that's what uha stands for. I am not sure, what it actually means to him, but I know what it means to me.

So, I painted the vulva which is pretty much in your face, but subtle at the same time – and then of course a little house with the price of \$500,000 on it. Now this house signifies the place where the concept of a vulva contracting and ready for birth is held. Kauae means jaw and is also a concept of wisdom or knowledge. There is an analogy to the mouth and symbolism of an entrance to allow becoming. There is a connection. That concept imbued in that site is now for sale: at 500, 000 dollars...

The painting of *Neha* (Fig. 2.15) is connected with section 14. Neha died giving birth on this parcel of land. The mound where she is said to have been buried can still be seen on that particular site. That section also has a \$500,000 price tag on it.

It is a great insult to Maori to see land offered for sale where they know that someone is buried. And also: who would want to buy this land, especially in light of the connections made visible by Ngaromoana in her works.

Over the many months of this so-called consultation, Ngaromoana became completely disillusioned with the submission process. People had written pages after pages, stating their concern and misgivings about the impending subdivision. However, this was to no avail, as consent was granted by Wairoa District Council and the development went ahead (Figs. 2.16, 2.17).



Figure 2.16



Figure 2.17

In order to demonstrate how much paper had been wasted in that fruitless effort to prevent the subdivision, Ngaromoana recycled submission copies and numerous newspaper articles and pasted them around the walls of the *Caravan* (Figs. 2.18,

2.19) as another element of *Naked Sands*. During the occupation this caravan had provided shelter and had been the meeting point of the community. Now it was turned into an art piece and mobile information centre, with which Ngaromoana hoped to travel the country, so that the *Caravan* would bring the Opoutama *Naked Sands* experience to the broader public and position it into both a national and global context.



Figure 2.18

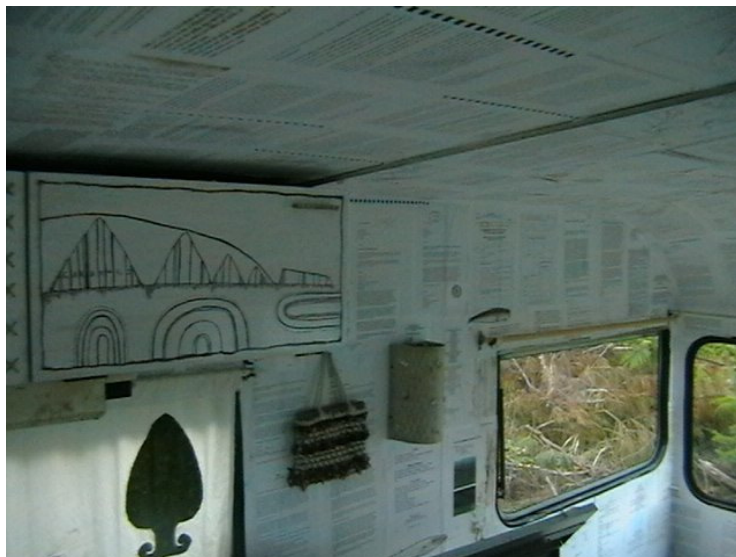


Figure 2.19

Whakapohane saw the *Naked Sands* project completed. In a last act of defiance, Ngaromoana and three friends decided to stage their final protest against the subdivision on the Bluebay foreshore, naked but for Maori cloaks (Figs. 2.20 - 2.21).⁸² In keeping with Maori tradition this action was intended as an insult. The *whakapohane*, or deliberate exposure by a woman of her genitals, is regarded as “the supreme gesture of contempt”.⁸³



Figure 2.20

Mikaere posits that this ultimate insult as one of the means a woman may employ to cut across a male speaker, is a graphic way of reminding men of the “ultimate

⁸² Photos in *Wairoa Star*, March 21, 2006.

⁸³ Anne Salmond in Ani Mikaere, *The Balance Destroyed. Consequences for Maori Women of the Colonisation of Tikanga Maori*, 2003, p. 40.

supremacy of female strength” by showing them the pathway to life and death. If men ignore or deny this power of female sexuality, they do so at their own risk.⁸⁴

Ngaromaoana says that after exhausting all other avenues of protest this symbolic act of March 2006 was not just directed against the development at Blue Bay but against all inappropriate costal subdivision on the Mahia peninsula.⁸⁵



Figure 2.21

For Ngaromoana this action marked closure of the way she had protested against the development, and she is proud of those who did not just walk away and let it all happen. She remembers:

⁸⁴ Mikaere, 2003, p.40.

⁸⁵ Personal communication, March 2009.

I am very proud of those who did the research and stood with the whenua during the occupation of Tataramoa, the public reserve in front of the subdivision, I am proud of the nannies who came down from my Ngai Tamanuhiri whanau. Those who have least to give had no problem in being there, those accused of being without value. All of us got to experience the beach, its many resources, its tohu revealed each day. Each one of us felt heavy in the heart knowing that this beach front would become privatized. We will be spectators from the other side of the railway line. Opoutama, or Mahia is today where Napier, Hastings, Gisborne were at the turn of early 1900's. This peninsula has been marked as a playground for the rich and the wealthy by the old colonial fathers of the Wairoa District Council. Most mana whenua will be marginalized with 10% dotted inconspicuously around the other suburbs. Most of the Opoutama community wishing to retain their way of life and the importance of a simple life and needs are being ignored. Do the means really justify the end? ⁸⁶

To Ngaromoana's dismay the subdivision could not be prevented and within a few months the land was ripped open, bulldozed, swept and stripped naked.

Papatuanuku, who had been clothed in trees and fauna, now lay bare and exposed; the devastation ripped through the local community and extended into the lives and hearts of those who had lived and loved on this part of her body. Ngaromoana remembers: "In a total destruction of all that had happened there before a completely different layer was now hovering over the land."⁸⁷ She did what she had to do, and utilized her artistic talents to highlight the significance of the Opoutama village environment. In response to the now *naked lands* she created *Naked Sands*, the project, which in all its individual components addresses issues concerning mana whenua. Ancient rituals connected to customary occupational rights are reenacted in the *Occupation* and in *Ahi Kaa*. Her *Wahi Tapu* paintings draw attention to the innate magical poutama structure of the land and at the same

⁸⁶ Personal communication, September 2006.

⁸⁷ Personal communication, October 2006.

time expose the vulnerability of that environment. They also challenge the wisdom of the submission process with regards to healthy/holistic decision making.

With *Naked Sands* Ngaromoana engages in the artistic process in order to protect a piece of land that is significant to her community and culturally significant to Maori. However, the Bluebay grounds were also treasured by visitors from all over the world, and consequently Ngaromoana addresses issues that manifest not only locally but also globally. As a concept, poutama is applicable beyond the boundaries of the village, and as a structure, it underlies all landscapes. Therefore, in introducing these concepts to a wider public, Ngaromoana not only reinforces mana whenua in connection with Maori land issues and grievances, but also takes a stand against inadequate development and abuse that are happening across the planet. In showing her contempt with the *Occupation* and the consequent staging of *Whakapohane*, in asserting a presence with *Ahi Kaa*, in creating a historical document of the events with the *Caravan*, she draws attention to the abuse of the Earth. *Naked Sands* is a very powerful political statement. While firmly based in her culture, Ngaromoana demonstrates an environmental and political awareness that connects the local and the village with the wider community. Her art practice and vision therefore make an important contribution to the wellbeing of the global village.

Chapter Three

Where there is a wound on the psyches and bodies of women, there is a corresponding wound at the same site in the culture itself, and finally on Nature herself. In a true holistic psychology all worlds are understood as interdependent, not as separate entities.⁸⁸

I have in the previous Chapters traced some of the concepts, such as whakapapa and mana whenua, which are embedded in the Opoutama Village environment and shown how Ngaromoana's artistic and personal life is informed by her acknowledgement of these concepts. In traditional Maori society those were part of tikanga, the code of law by which society was regulated. Colonisation and modern influences have brought philosophies which, essentially, disregard tikanga Maori and have thrown Maori society into a state of perilous imbalance. Linked to the disrespect of mana whenua are land losses, urban drift, and loss of language and culture. Given the intimate connection between women and the land, Christianity and the inculcation of patriarchal values as the basis of common law also had an immediate and particularly devastating effect on Maori women, whose status, mana wahine, suffered a similar fate as mana whenua.

The inseparable link between mana whenua and mana wahine is rooted in mythology and manifests in some of the language associated with women and the reproductive process. Hineahuone, the first woman, was created from the red clay at

⁸⁸ Clariss Pinkola Estes, *Women Who Run With The Wolves*, 1992, p.204.

Kurawaka, the pubic area of Papatuanuku. The word whenua translates as both, land and placenta, and atua, god or supernatural being, also means menstrual blood. Whanau, to be born, also describes the extended family, while hapu translates as pregnant and is also the word for sub-tribe, which is the key political, social and economic unit, as Maori communities were almost invariably hapu-based.⁸⁹

Ngaromoana, who is only too aware of this connection, knows that as the land has been disrespected, subdued, abused and exploited, so have women; being so closely linked, they present simultaneous, parallel targets. While throughout her life she has been dedicated to safeguarding mana whenua and has used her artistic talents towards that end, she has also, throughout her career, been aware of the demolition of mana wahine Maori and consequently tried to protect and help to restore mana wahine in all its different facets.

This chapter concentrates on Ngaromoana's work on women and addresses issues of representation. I discuss several significantly different groups of works, spanning more than two decades. Produced at different stages in the artist's life, these will highlight aspects of her personal and artistic development and simultaneously expose the "wound in the culture". I posit that this wound is located in the *global* culture and can be called the 'general state of women's affairs'. This festering site reveals itself in the focal lens of representation. Art historians, and more specifically feminist art historians, have made it their task to examine the

⁸⁹ Mikaere, 2003, p.32.

presence/representation/ of women in the arts. Relying on the work of Carol Duncan and Marilyn French, I create a connection between Ngaromoana and the status of women and women artists in general. Exploring from a representational point of view the concept of mana wahine Maori, I reference examples from Maori cosmology, mythology and historical accounts. On the basis of these different aspects of the above concept, Ngaromoana's work is contrasted against images of Maori women by European artists, both colonial and contemporary.

In the process of this analysis it will become apparent that Ngaromoana's more recent *Naked and...* project (2007) is a direct sequel to *Naked Sands*. Where *Naked Sands* drew attention to the precious Opoutama village environment as a part of the physical body of Papatuanuku, *Naked and...* casts the light of awareness on women, our bodies and our immediate circumstances. While representation is discussed within the frame of postcolonial and/or feminist discourses, I also pursue the question of the location of the artist's work within the wider parameters of women's art. Therefore, I examine once again the relevance of her 'village art' within a broader and international context. Clearly, Ngaromoana's work makes an important contribution to the restoration of mana wahine Maori and is significant within the context of women's art.

Ngaromoana has painted women throughout her career and continues to do so. She believes this is because she sees the world from a woman's perspective. Living

in the natural environment of Opoutama, she is, of course, surrounded by female influences. Papatuanuku, Hine One, Hine Tua Kiri and Hine Moana, all play crucial and active roles in the village environment and are paid respect by the artist. Buried in the local sands, the ancestress Rongomaiwahine as well as her mother and grandmothers are around Ngaromoana always, while the possession of her ancestral land comes through her female line as well. In *Mataora* she has stated:

My work has always related to the female element – women, their political, spiritual identities as well as the sensual. I've always painted my women beautiful and by God I'm glad I do.⁹⁰

The Takitimu Festival of 1989 provided the first opportunity for Ngaromoana to celebrate her female ancestry in her work. *Kahungunu* (Fig. 3.1), the piece she entered into this exhibition, consists of three panels, and provides insight into how she saw Maori women.⁹¹ The centrepiece between the two side panels pays respect to Papatuanuku. She represents the base, without her nothing exists and she is also the connecting element. The right panel exhibits many different Maori designs showing the diversity of iwitanga. The left 'taiaha' (spear-like weapon) element of the painting represents the ancestor Kahungunu, who is reported to have been an expert in its use.⁹² As the main thrust of the work this panel can also be interpreted as alluding to the sexual prowess attributed to him. This left panel is adorned with

⁹⁰ *Mataora*, 1996, p.134.

⁹¹ My photograph here is of a printed and framed photo, showing Ngaromoana in 1989 sitting inside the 3 panels before they were hung. In the meantime, 20 years later Ngaromoana had pasted layers of other materials onto the original photo in order to create a new support for a new painting. She was kind enough to rip it all off. Also half of the bottom Papatuanuku part has been cut off. While obviously the quality of my photo is not good, it can at least give an idea of the original work.

⁹² Several schools established within the tribal area are still practicing his styles.

eight strong female forms, each of them representing one of Kahungunu's eight wives, amongst them Rongomaiwahine.

Already in this early work Ngaromoana's focus is on the strength and beauty of the women. With the emphasis placed on the very strong outlines, Kahungunu's wives show some 'attitude', power and mana in their own right. In addition, the shapes of these women and also of others Ngaromoana has painted are very sensual with expressive, flowing lines.



Figure 3.1

She explains:

I think I wanted to say that Maori women are beautiful, especially since in those times the western look was promoted in significant magazines and everywhere else. I did these paintings so that Maori women can feel that they are beautiful, they are 'wahine ataahua'.⁹³

Ngaromoana continued to paint different series on *Wahine Ataahua* (beautiful women) over the next 5 years, a theme which she revisits. At that time she was looking at women having control not just of iwitanga, but also of other aspects of their lives, such as femininity and beauty:

...without having to have tons of clothes on, you know. That whole Victorian aspect of colonization, and also the pressures of modern fashion trends to *conform and consume*, I was pulling that apart. I don't think the shapes are explicit, but they are very sensual. They are essential and meant to convey female essence: womanhood, sisterhood, daughters, partners, lovers, teachers, healers, survivors, and keepers of the seed – all of those elements of being female. They have a different kind of line to a carving figure, which is rougher and essentially from a male vantage point. I think culture is identifying us, Maori women, as belonging to something and being controlled by that. I was trying to say: we own ourselves, we own our bodies, we own who we give ourselves to, we have a right to be seen as beautiful, not compared to western stereotypes, but beautiful in our own right.⁹⁴

Ngaromoana's paintings of women also represent aspects of herself and her life at that particular stage. Therefore they can be considered self-portraits. I discuss several paintings from the *Wahine Ataahua* work, which can be identified as significant steps within her personal and artistic development.

⁹³ Personal communication, March 2009.

⁹⁴ Ibid.



Figure 3.2



Figure 3.3

In these particular paintings (Figs. 3.2, 3.3) from around 1990/1991, Ngaromoana chose black as the predominant colour. For her, black means hidden potential and the deeper knowledge within, while pinks and blues are the colours of dawn and dusk and also the blood flow to and from the heart. In Figure 3.2 the emphasis is on

a woman reclining on what appears to be a rigid cross made up of pink and blue koruru (gable figure) patterns. Her body shows strong outlines in very soft and feminine pinks. Her head is tilted upwards and the long pink hair seems to be creating a connection with the heavens above. Her upper body is leaning towards the viewer, supported by her left arm, while her right arm remains hidden. The hand is three fingered reminiscent of Maori carvings and also alluding to the significance of the number 3 as representing past, present and future or mind, body and soul. Confident and relaxed the woman seems to be lifting herself off that cross, ready to push forward.

I have indicated previously that Ngaromoana does not always know or even question where her creative ideas come from or where they will take her – she does the work, which she thinks is often caused and influenced by the flux around her. Interpretation and analysis can come later, and sometimes she surprises herself, as in this case, when I asked her why this woman has no feet? They appear to be cut off or have sunk into the cross, as if something was holding her back, rendering her immobile and impeding her desires for freedom. Further discussion revealed that the cross represents a crossroads while the koruru stand for significant male figures and male culture. The woman shows Ngaromoana herself as being at a crossroads longing to move forward. At that time in her life she was questioning both the path she was on as well as the society she was living in and used painting and art like a karakia to ask for divine guidance.

Similar colours have been applied in Figure 3.3 but now in an upright position, the woman has made the choice to move on and has left the crossroads. The positioning of the legs indicates that she has found some footing and is moving away from the confines of a world dominated by structures, politics and practices that are not healthy for her. A capital letter 'I' talks about the acknowledgment of *Self*, of standing tall and strong, of demanding respect. However, that letter in its soft colours is not rigid and neither is the woman's body: her head is facing the sky while, likewise, her upper body is slightly bent upwards. Therefore she does not appear to be entirely self-absorbed but again to be acknowledging a higher dimension, perhaps still asking for spiritual guidance and insight. Ngaromoana was looking "towards the cosmic future in search for truth, trying to leave behind human frailties and influences of deceit and delusion."⁹⁵ Again the details of limbs are not fully developed, this time there are no lower arms or hands; there is still a sense of uncertainty and incapacitation.

Within the *Wahine Ataahua* work Ngaromoana focused on two types of representation: her women were either reclining, which in her painterly vocabulary means that they are coming from or are attached to the land, or they were in strong upright positions such as Figure 3.4. Parehuia, a female symbol of rites of passage, has been placed center stage. Therefore, this painting also alludes to blossoming into maturity. Further cultural reference is made through the piupiu one of the

⁹⁵ Personal communication, March 2009.



Figure 3.4

women is wearing. While the blue and turquoise colours radiate a certain coolness, the heart area of the plume displays a warm glow. Again, these women appear to be asking for divine intervention.

In a series of triangular works (Figs. 3.5, 3.6) the female figure is imposed onto a triangular landscape. Ngaromoana tells the story of Hine-nui-te-po (Fig.3.6) and her defeat of Maui, who disguised as a lizard, tried to win eternal life for humankind by outsmarting the Great Lady of the Night.⁹⁶ Again parehuia can be

⁹⁶Patricia Grace tells the story as follows: In order to do this he had to “enter Hine-nui-te-Po by way of the birth passage, pass through her body, eat her heart and emerge from her mouth. He took his friends, the birds with him to watch. Once there Maui tried different disguises before settling on a lizard form. He began his journey through Hine-nui-te-Po’s legs but the fantail could not hold back his laughter at the ludicrous sight. This woke Hine-nui-te-Po who crushed Maui between her legs. Thus the balance was kept.” Grace in Robyn Kahukiwa & Patricia Grace, *Wahine Toa, Women of Maori Myth*, 1984, p.78.

identified in the corners and as the central figure. Therefore, these paintings, too, talk about mana wahine, about growing into maturity, into one's own strength, about being comfortable and at home within the female Self. The script below both women reads: *She alone holds the identity to the survival of the tribe.*



Figure 3.5



Figure 3.6

Mana wahine Maori is rooted in the creation myths and in the overriding tapu of whakapapa. In this instance, Ngaromona's paintings refer to the status of Maori

women as *whare tangata*, the house of humanity.⁹⁷ This traditional concept acknowledges the continuity of the bloodline as dependant upon women as the bearers of past, present and future generations. Therefore their role is of paramount importance and holds significant *mana*.⁹⁸

The high value placed on the *whare tangata* and its vulnerability to spiritual forces are reflected in Maori attitudes to the *whare ngaro* (lost or extinct house). A *whare ngaro* can also mean the end of a descent line. As Mikare points out, it was considered a terrible tragedy for the whole *whanau*, if a woman was unable to conceive or if any of her children died young.⁹⁹ The power of the *whare tangata* in ensuring, on the other hand, the survival of the *whanau*, *hapu* and *iwi* is expressed in the story of *Te Ao-kapurangi*, a *Rangiwewehi* woman:

[She] saved her *iwi* from death at the hands of Hongi Hika by straddling the ridgepole of the *whare Tama-te-Kapua* and calling them to enter the house. They passed beneath her thighs, and found safety within the *whare tangata*. Thus it was *Te Ao-kapurangi*'s symbolic womb that ensured their survival.¹⁰⁰

Having given birth to eight children *Ngaromoana* has herself mourned the early death of one of her sons. Figures 3.7, 3.8 draw attention to this aspect of womanhood: the grief of mothers around the loss of a child, whether to illness or in war.

⁹⁷ *Whakatauki*, expressions or proverbs such as the following, remind of the status of women as *whare tangata*: *He tapu, tapu, tapu rawa atu te wahine*, the woman is tapu, very, very tapu, indeed, and: *He wahine, he whenua, ka ngaro te tangata*, without women and land, men are lost. In her essay "He Aha Te Mea Nui?", Waerete Norman provides several possible interpretations/translations of this *whakatauki*. *Te Pua*, 1992, Volume 1, Number 1, pp. 1-9.

⁹⁷ Mikaere, 2003, p.31.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p.34.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

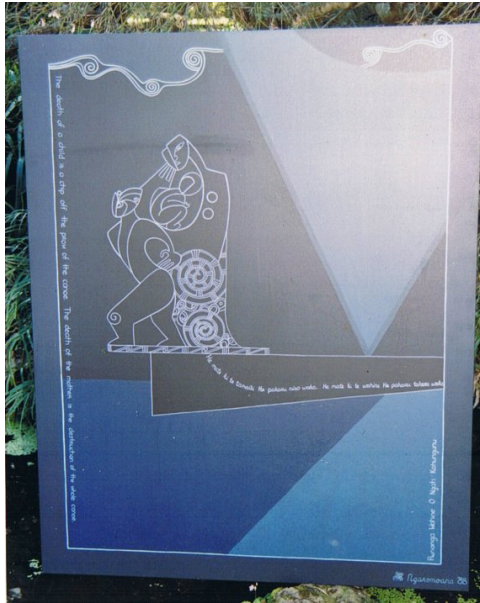


Figure 3.8



Figure 3.9

Figure 3.8 is an illustration of the whakatauki: *He mate ki te tamaiti he pakuru niao, te mate ia ite wahine he pakaru takere waka*, which translates as *The death of a child is only a chip off the top plank, but the loss of a wife is the destruction of the whole canoe*.¹⁰¹ The painting again recalls the importance of the *whare tangata* and reconfirms the respect traditionally paid to her.

Many works from the early 1990s show women, who are damaged, incomplete or impaired in some way. Often the limbs are not fully developed, sometimes hands and/or feet are missing – and they appear to have been cut off. Also, the heads are empty and without facial detail, as if there were no individuality, feelings, thoughts

¹⁰¹ Mitchell, 1972, p. 246. I have correctly quoted this source. However, Maori speakers question the original translation; in particular there are doubts that *niao* is the correct term. Perhaps it should be *noa iho*, while *ite* could be *i te*?

or perhaps no mean to express those. In spite of the essential beauty of the shapes a feeling of uneasiness persists when contemplating these images and disturbing questions arise as to the welfare of Maori women. The wound on the female body and psyche becomes obvious.¹⁰² Quite unsurprisingly around the time Ngaromoana painted these works, a Mana Wahine claim was lodged with the Waitangi Tribunal, alleging that the Crown had breached its Treaty obligations to Maori women by failing to protect their rangatiratanga (chiefly status, right of self determination) which resulted in undermining their status.¹⁰³

The root of the problem is addressed by feminist author Marilyn French. Examining the situation globally, she makes the point that a political, socio-economical and cultural war has been fought against women since the advent of patriarchy. At the time she published her book in 1992, the figures presented at the United Nations Conference on Women in Copenhagen in 1980 remained true:

Women do between two-thirds and three quarters of the work in the world. They also produce 45 percent of the world's food. But they are still granted only 10 percent of the world's income and 1 percent of the world's property; part of this one percent masks male ownership hidden for tax purposes.¹⁰⁴

In 1988 our share of seats in the world's parliaments was 15% reducing to 11% by 1994. In New Zealand (September 1995) 20 of 99 Members of Parliament were women (20%).¹⁰⁵ This figure has, during the last 6 years, increased to and been stable at 32%. While in 1995 one out of 20 Cabinet Ministers was female, there are presently 8 women amongst 26 Cabinet Ministers. However, there is no reason to

¹⁰² See Quote 1, beginning of chapter.

¹⁰³ Mikaere, 2003, p.9.

¹⁰⁴ Marilyn French, *The War against Women*, 1992, p.24.

¹⁰⁵ Anna Klekottka, "Gender Balance? Equality? – The Gaps are Huge", 1995.

believe that our lot has much improved: quite on the contrary, upon closer inspection of most statistics including the arts, that *war against women* continues to rage on.

While in this conflict the *representation* of women has been a key issue, the art world proves to be a war zone. Western feminist art critics such as Chatwick (2002), Nochlin (1989, 1999) and Pollock (1981, 1988) approach the involvement of women in the arts from two fundamentally different angles: their role as active producers of art and their role as passive objects of representations by (usually) male artists. Austin Harrison asserts that:

Until the twentieth century it would seem that women have appeared in art history far more in the role of passive objects of art than they have as active producers of art; at least, that is, on the assumption of a restrictive definition of 'art' limited to prestigious genres such as oil painting, portraiture, history painting and mythological painting. In a vast quantity of representations traditionally defined as 'art', women scarcely figure in art otherwise than as objects of a male gaze, as objects of spectacle and curiosity, or as symbols of male material wealth and social prestige.¹⁰⁶

I explore over the following pages these two aspects of women's involvement in the art world. If we go by the representation of women artists in two of the worlds' major collections of modern art, women have not been active at all over the last century. As of 2003, approximately 1.14% of the paintings and sculptures in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMa, founded 1929) in New York have been created by women. The figure of 7.4% for the Centre Pompidou in Paris also includes photographs, architecture, design, film and video.¹⁰⁷ Women are practically invisible. The modern art museum, while defining what is 'art' by what

¹⁰⁶ Austin Harrington, *Art and Social Theory*, 2004, p.44.

¹⁰⁷ Personal correspondence, April 2003.

is purchased and exhibited, claims authenticity while at the same time perpetuating a distorted reality of art production. Feminist art history has provided factual documentation of the systematic differences women have experienced in art education and art practice and found that regardless of individual artists' occasional success, art registers discriminatory cultural practices and is - in short - gendered.¹⁰⁸ The truth is: women artist have been deliberately excluded from the public arena.

Ngaromoana confirms a similarly gendered approach. She specifically recalls an incident in 1990, when Maori women were finding their art voices and wanted to share the light. They wanted to get into galleries and museums and make a living from their work. At that time the most ambitious and important exhibition of contemporary Maori art, *Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake* (1990-1991), was to be held at the Dominion Museum in Wellington and only an insignificant number of women were selected to take part. Robyn Kahukiwa boycotted that show due to the under-representation of women.¹⁰⁹ Ngaromoana recalls:

Robyn was aware of the fabulous art that was out there, she had seen a lot of it, and was herself not truly respected as an artist in her own right at that time. She had been more or less added on to the boys' club, and she was not having any of it. She withdrew her works. Her stance was about *equality - equal representation for women*, and that was also what mattered to me: Pass the remote control! Pass the remote!¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Estella Lauter, "Re-enfranchising Art", *Hypatia*, vol.5, no.2, Summer 1990.

¹⁰⁹ In *Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake*, the exhibition catalogue, 1993, p. 20, this incident is mentioned as: "Other commitments prevented Robyn Kahukiwa, Albert McCarthy, Darcy Nicholas, Shona Rapira Davies and Kura Rewiri from accepting the invitation to contribute work." While Ngaromoana has informed us about Robyn's commitment, we don't know about the reasons of the other artists to not take part.

¹¹⁰ Personal communication, April 2009.

Ngaromoana and a few other women, who had been invited, followed suit. This decision reflected her approach to whanaungatanga, as “carrying the banner, carrying the vanguard together”.¹¹¹ Whanaungatanga was also the concept behind *Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake*, a title that Ngaromoana thinks was actually very funny. Taikaka means the inside, the hard part of the wood and that exhibition talked about the soft wood falling away to get to the hard wood. She says:

Obviously, you are not going to get that hard wood without the soft wood! So here you go again: It’s about testosterone - and these are probably all subconscious innuendos. Perhaps with the men it was always going to be about testosterone. Maybe, they took it upon themselves to put the male element first and somehow or other we fell behind. I guess that in these modern times Maori art has been and still is very male driven and male dominated. Maybe the men thought that there was still a great upheaval, and maybe they wanted to intensify the power, wanted to strengthen the thrust of Maori art and that’s why they chose other men over women in those exhibitions. That said a lot about the balance of power within Maori art. Art is not war; it is creative expression in times of war as well as in times of peace.

Also, within the context of Maori an exclusion of women does not make sense, as it is usually the Maori women who keep the family together and the culture going, through looking after and teaching the kids. I don’t think Maori in its concept encourages ‘male only’ participation – it is about whanau, it is about community, it is encompassing. It seems, that men are trying to get their work out their, get their sales, show group force while women’s contribution is fought against. Perhaps this is a reenactment of colonial structures and a way of constructing Maori art according to Western patterns. Maybe that was what *Taikaka* was about.¹¹²

While within the context of contemporary Maori art the participation of women appears to be presently higher, with approximately 25-30% percent in major

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid. During the course of this interview Ngaromoana expressed the view that the problem of representation may perhaps also lie with Maori academics of art who invite to shows, talk and write about artists, etc. and therefore hold enormous power. “Often they have preconceived notions and don’t probably venture out to hui or marae or connect to the networks we have. They are looking from the outside in. It can be really difficult to not have that kanohi ki te kanohi, face to face experience. Then we have to rely on what somebody said about someone else and it makes communicating concepts, ideas and certainly protests really hard.”

exhibitions and publications¹¹³ that ‘passing of the remote control’ did not really eventuate and equal representation is still no where in sight.¹¹⁴ The patterns set for the representation of woman artists in western societies appear to have been emulated and superimposed onto the modern and contemporary Maori art scene. Maori women, too, needed and still need to organize their own exhibitions to allow for aspects of the feminine and female world to be expressed. They must write their own stories, and promote their own works if they want to be seen. While more Maori women are now in the public eye, the environment is still harsh and far from woman friendly. Ngaromoana regrets that it is still very few who are ‘allowed through the door’.

Some cute ones, some ‘chicky babes’ – and it’s really hard on them. The frumpy mothers are out. Individuality and professional self worth are compromised. Robyn did a lot for us. She was the frumpy mum then. She was at the front, she was awesome and she did it. But when you are in the fierce

¹¹³ An exhibition at the Waikato Art Museum Sept 11 -17 October 1976, “*Contemporary Maori Art*” featured 3 women amongst 19 artists, which amounts to less than 16%. The milestone exhibition *Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake*, 1990, showed in two different sections the works of 2 women amongst 19 artists, (10%) while 10 regional, iwi based groups installed their works separately. These regional groups had more women included. *Whenua- born of the Land* held at Tinakori Gallery, Wellington, in 2004 (Toi Maori Aotearoa) included 5 women out of 20 artists, representing 25%. *Mataora*, 1996, the first major publication of contemporary Maori art, features 50 artists, including 14 women or 28%. *Taiawhio*, 2002, 7 out of 15 artists are women. Adding to these the Hethet Whanau (4 women, 2 men) and Moko Productions, 3 women, the female artists included in this publication represent 58%. *Taiawhio II*, 2007, introduces 17 artists, amongst them 6 women, or 35%. (I did not include in these figures the Atamira Dance Collective, (5 women and 3 men). Within the scope of this thesis I can only briefly highlight these important issues. I therefore chose examples from different time periods that I thought might represent a reasonable average. It would be very interesting to follow up on the national figures of female students at the various art institutions, as well as on the figures of women artists represented in major shows and museum collections.

¹¹⁴ In this context I do not address possible tapu restrictions of medium. My information is that those are not present in contemporary Maori art education. However, at Te Puia, the New Zealand Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua, females are altogether excluded.

light, you get burnt. It hurt her having to battle so much; sometimes our women just didn't want to battle.¹¹⁵

Ngaromoana says that the harshness of colonization, which has perhaps enforced the harshness of Maori men, has made her discerning and cautious, and that without Robyn and some of those women who were really out there doing the political – “the really political stuff”¹¹⁶, she would never be able to do her own work.

The genesis of women's passive involvement in the arts is no less disturbing than our active role. Art historian Carol Duncan identifies the modern art museum as a ritual of male transcendence, organized around male fears, fantasies and desires, its spaces positively crowded with images - mostly of women. Again with reference to MoMa, Duncan is rightly concerned that “the collection's recurrent images of sexualized, female bodies actively masculinizes the museum as a social environment.”¹¹⁷ Since the selective focus has been on the representation of a *male only* art, important women artists have been excluded from public view and it seems that the female presence is necessary only in the form of imagery. By emphasizing and promoting the *male gaze* this museum has, like many others, continued to legitimize a disturbing, often pornographic view of women. Museums are

¹¹⁵ Ngaromoana remembers the times when Robyn was treated really poorly, by other artists, and also Maori men artists. She will be forever grateful to her. Having walked in the fierce light of academic study and social interpretation, analyzed by art historians and art critics as well as publicly scrutinized, Robyn has been a mentor and a major inspiration. Robyn and senior artists like Kura Te Waru Rewiri and Emare Karaka have paved the way for younger Maori woman who now can have a choice.

¹¹⁶ Personal communication, March 2009.

¹¹⁷ Carol Duncan, “The MoMa's Hot Mamas”, 1989, in *The Aesthetics of Power*, 1993.

educational institutions, they set standards, and clearly those standards have done nothing to promote the status of women in any adequate way.

The concept of whanaungatanga as a metaphor for the interconnectedness of all things and beings can be likened to Estes' approach of a holistic psychology. It follows logically that within that universal *war against women*, mana wahine Maori cannot possibly remain, or have remained unaffected. And neither can Ngaromoana, however remote her little village may be. Therefore, her art as well as her situation as a woman, and more specifically as an indigenous woman, must be considered within this larger context. Maori and Pacific women have, like no other ethnic group, been subjected to the *male gaze* ever since the first explorers visited the Pacific centuries ago. In order to further contextualize Ngaromoana's representations of women and femininity, I examine the intentions, implications and effects of that particular gaze.

As a stereotype *The Pacific* is embedded in the discourse on colonization, representation and gender. Dusky Maidens, Pacific Belles, Muses and Venuses have been designated a crucial part in the creation of the myth that has been perpetuated in the various arts, including literature and film. Europe far from bothered by geographical specificity, conflated the Pacific into a stereotype of the exotic, primitive paradise where men were fine examples of masculinity while women were sexually uninhibited. The dreams and myths of Pacific peoples were

kept alive by 19th century world exhibitions which enticed artists, such as Gauguin and Matisse and writers, for example Somerset Maugham, to seek that ideal and venture into the Pacific themselves.¹¹⁸ Subsequently stories and images went back to the different homelands, as had been the case since the visits of the earliest explorers.

Leonard Bell has comprehensively discussed European images of Maori between 1840 and 1914.¹¹⁹ In order to exemplify how representations of Maori women were used to serve the aims of colonization and at the same time soiling mana wahine, I draw on Bell's critique of two paintings of Hinemoa¹²⁰ by two different artists, Chevalier and Lindauer, as well as the painting *Spoils to the Victor* by Steele. With regards to Chevalier's painting *Hinemoa: A Maori Maiden* of 1879,¹²¹ Bell ponders:

Could that painting in its context of production and exhibition be regarded as a form of symbolic possession, not just of a non-European female and an aspect of Maori culture, but also of Maori land and culture, which Hinemoa could stand for, in general – at a time when New Zealand was being taken over by European colonists?¹²²

And at the same time it must be interpreted as a vicious attack on mana wahine

Maori. Hinemoa is a legendary heroine of great significance to the Arawa people. Is

¹¹⁸ Karen Stevenson, "The Role of Hollywood Designers in the Creation of Paradise", at *Featuring Paradise: The Pacific in Film*, Honolulu, Hawaii. November 1997.

¹¹⁹ Leonard Bell, *Colonial Constructs, European Images of Maori 1840-1914*, 1992.

¹²⁰ As a puhi of high birth, a position which in itself held high status and would have commanded great respect, Hinemoa was an important asset, the pride of the tribe, destined to uphold and increase its mana through a suitable, arranged and possibly politically motivated marriage with a man of status. Hinemoa, however, was committed to Tutanekai, a man socially not her equal, whom she was forbidden to meet. Refusing to be commodity material and determined to change her destiny, she followed her heart: One night, supported by gourds, she swam the long way across Lake Rotorua, out to Mokaia Island, where he lived, obviously risking her life in the process. Eventually her family supported her choice.

¹²¹ Bell, 1992, p.141.

¹²² *ibid*, p.143.

there any sign of the strength and courage she must have possessed to do what she did? Clearly, Chevalier's way of relating her story does it no justice. *His Hinemoa* is a passive woman of unspecific origin, certainly not Maori, draped in exotic garb, dreamily drifting on the water, not at all inclined to get herself wet. Her venture would have been surrounded by a field of consequences and implications, none of which are conveyed in this painting. Chevalier modeled his version after "longstanding European associations of beautiful women, water and intimations of sexuality".¹²³ His Venus is curvaceous and sensuous, with long flowing hair that is "so often an erotic fetish in Victorian art" and also interpreted as a sign of unrestrained sexuality, while her soft, fetching look is directed at the viewer.¹²⁴

Marilyn French comments:

[Male] artists appropriate the female body as their subject, their possession. Whether they paint women with hatred or idealize them or vapidly sentimentalize them or appropriate them with cold superiority, they are implicitly assaulting female reality and authority.¹²⁵

The painting *Hinemoa* by Gottfried Lindauer (1907), although different in approach, is no different in effect. It distorts in a similar way her mana: by completely omitting it. While we can identify the young woman as Maori by physiognomy, dress, the taonga as well as the native bush setting, this painting must be read as a *reclining nude/bather* type work as they were popular in contemporary British and European salons. In this genre of painting, often equipped with literary, historical or biblical titles, reclining females were "posed for the display of breasts

¹²³ Bell, 1992, p. 143.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ French, 1992, p.166.

and limbs, eyes averted, with slightly open mouths, seemingly passive and submissive in demeanour.”¹²⁶

Lindauer’s renderings of Maori people as Bell elaborates, “were part of a network of evaluations and definitions that served to legitimize European economic and political power in New Zealand”, and was “necessary for colonial Europeans in their moves to establish themselves the sovereign right to be in New Zealand”.¹²⁷

Clearly, with the help of their artists, the colonial fathers also transferred to this part of the world a mission that had already been successfully underway in Europe for centuries: the demolition of women’s power.

That deed seems completed in Louis Steele’s painting *Spoils to the Victor* (1908).

This Maori woman, who can, like Chevalier’s *Hinemoa*, be interpreted as metaphorically representing the land, is defeated, bound and conquered. She is displayed in a manner that completely strips her of any powers but instead accentuates her vulnerability, provides “optimum viewing conditions for the spectator” and “best facilitates a fantasy of sexual possession.”¹²⁸

In the above paintings the (male) viewer’s sexuality/sexual response is addressed, while there is no suggestion that the women represented may themselves have

¹²⁶ Bell, 1992, p. 210.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p. 209. The Hinemoa legend was very popular among Europeans in New Zealand at the time. Numerous versions appeared in the media and “on various levels on the conventional art hierarchical scale” (ibid. p. 211). It would be interesting, but beyond the scope of this thesis, to examine if any aspects of mana wahine Maori were adequately acknowledged at all within any of these versions.

¹²⁸ Bell, 1992, p.175.

possessed powerful libidos. The stories of Hinemoa as well as the account of how Rongomaiwahine called Kahungunu to her, are examples of women choosing to take control of this aspect of womanhood. Mikaere asserts that Maori women understood the power of their sexuality very well and were “perfectly comfortable with using it whenever they felt it was appropriate to do so.”¹²⁹

These issues are also central to Ngaromoana’s art practice. As a daughter of the iwi of Rongomaiwahine, the artist is fully aware of the enchanting power Pacific women have been holding over the (European, colonial) male gaze. In her poem *I Love My Grasskirt* she teases male onlookers with a special sway of her hips, and in doing so, reclaims control over the piupiu, a cultural referent of female Pacific identity so often depicted in colonial paintings and postcards.

I love my grass skirt
Piupiu
Swings, tapping, with the sway of my hips
I wear grass skirts
Made by my mothers mothers mother
On ceremonies now as then
So special the sway of my hips
I wear my grass skirt
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa
You think you can take my grass skirt away
Uuuuuuuuu
I smile at you
Ngiiiiiiiiiii...
Your thoughts become weak
Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa
Faster I sway

¹²⁹ Mikaere, 2003, p. 38. Under the heading *Female Sexuality Celebrated* (pp. 38-46) Mikaere provides several detailed accounts.

You suppose more than you see
 Aaaaaaa
 Poor sailor, clergy, farmer, man
 Intoxicated, so drunk with want.
 Aaaaaaaaa
 My Polynesian grass skirt
 Hung low upon my hips
 My Polynesian Lei
 Hung low upon my breast
 My Polynesian mother taught me to smile this way
 Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee

Poetry has recently been added as another medium to Ngaromoana's artistic kete (basket), which indicates the scale of her creative potential.¹³⁰ This poem was, amongst others, included in her exhibition *Naked and...* (2007). Held in Hastings, this show dealt with stereotypical interpretations generally imposed onto (Maori) women and featured the works Ngaromoana produced in connection with her Master's degree. As a multi-layered multimedia project, *Naked and ...* addresses and re-presents aspects of mana wahine, of femaleness and femininity. In an effort to promote a body image beyond titillation or manipulation, which have so often been the main ingredient of representations of women, Ngaromoana also uses her own body to reaffirm femaleness in all its many different facets.

The cover illustration for the accompanying documentation (Fig. 3.10), for example, plays on da Vinci's image, the *Vitruvian Man*.¹³¹ Ngaromoana has appropriated this

¹³⁰ Within the context of this thesis I will not generally comment on the included poems but rather let them speak for themselves.

¹³¹ A connection must also be made with the carving of Rongomaiwahine above the entrance door of Takitimu Marae, Chapter One, Fig. 1.32.

iconic representation of human (in this instance *male*) proportions and placed a woman - herself - in the position of the original male. In the following poem she extends an *Invitation to Dance* to the Renaissance genius himself:

Leonardo Da Vinci
Nerdi Mystic
True to his heart
Obsessive stickler for detail
Imagination wild
One moaning Lisa with her taniwha smile
Chopping up dead bodies
Medical experiments
Putrid smells and maggots
In the name of science and art
Discovering, pretending, disguising, depressing
Long lived in life
Living long after death
One moaning Leonardo with a taniwha smile
Dance with me, you old fart
We will build a space ship and fly off into the sun



Just when you thought
You had seen it all
Have a look
Have a listen
Read whatever
You want to read
Into it
So long as you smile
“Thou Art”
“TOI”
A whole mystery
To solve

(Figure 3.10)

Quite like in the *Wahine Ataahua* work of 15 and 20 years earlier, Ngaromoana takes ownership of the body, of female sensuality and female beauty. This time, however, her approach is more radical, direct and articulate as she also uses language and images of her own body. She aims to uncover how we go through the camouflages of life, and what is really underneath it all. In Figure 3.10 she shows us: this is what is there when we strip it all down – this is all there is, this is who she is, vulnerable and yet powerful because she owns it all and claims it all:

...powerful within the sisterhood of friends, naked as in pristine, naked from birth to death – and how we hide that and go through life covering up – from simple to complicated, unclothed to clothed, open to closed, powerful to powerless, natural to civilized, one grain of sand on a beach, one life in the continuum of existence, one atom in the vastness of the whole, the representation of one second in my whole 52 years, one instance of who I am. One painting only captures one moment, one aspect and one fraction. You will only give glimpses of the female body and will. You may think you see everything, but I own what and who I am. Naked and wild and howling with the wind, I am a wild woman.¹³²

She is the bold, the beautiful, the naked, mother, grandmother, she is the artist and Maori, she is the scribble of her name under a painting. She is the sum of it all and she is so much more than the whole, because at the same time there is all the mystery... “Thou Art, TOI”.

While working on *Naked and...* Ngaromoana was contemplating women’s clothing, adornments and other female paraphernalia. In that process she went through some of the materials she had been gathering and using over the years, such as different

¹³² Personal communication, May 2009. ‘Wild Woman’ refers to the book *Women who run with the Wolves*, 1992, by Jungian analyst and story teller Clarissa P. Estes.

types of wrapping materials and papers, thin sewing patterns, bubble wrap, gold foil, ribbons and bows, handbags and old suitcases. The result was the *Veils Series* as part of *Naked and...* These works started off as piupiu. Ngaromoana liked the way the materials looked so feminine when held together, and the way they hung. When held down between two hands they looked like uha, like vessels, the female element, again creating a connection with mana wahine. She says: “They started to work their own magic and to find their own ways of traveling in meaning. When they became veils, it was all part of that mystique of the female, the feminine element.”¹³³

Ngaromoana began to add rose-like flowers that she made out of different papers or wrapping materials and also incorporated artificial roses at the top. Being “such an old symbol – at least in Western cultures – of love, of the heart chakra and also of enlightenment, roses also allude to the aspect of blossoming.”¹³⁴ She then adapted these veils to represent different stages of womanhood, from *Kotiro*, the young girl (Fig.3.10) to *Puhi*¹³⁵ (Fig. 3.11), to *Mama*, the mother (Fig.3.12). She also wrote poems to accompany each of them. These *Veils* are, indeed, beautiful examples and reminders of female mystique, highlighting the tender and soft aspects of mana wahine, which in this time and age are perhaps not so freely exposed.

¹³³ Personal communication, March 2009.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Amongst other interpretations William’s Dictionary translates the word puhi as a much –courted unbetrothed young woman. [1992:304].



Figure 3.10

Kotiro
 Eeee
 Ooooo
 Eeee
 Ooooo
 Little honoured one
 Golden
 Fragile Not broken
 Dancing, singing freely
 Joy, grace, faith, Marama

Kotiro
 Eeee
 Ooooo
 Eeee
 Ooooo

Protected, cherished by the mother, sisters and women everywhere
 Take care, take care, be aware, take care
 Of all little girls



Puhi
 UUUUU
 Eeeeeee
 UUUUU
 Eeeeeee
 Within your belly
 Puku
 UUUUU
 is the awakening sound
 The awakening fluttering
 Uuuuuuuuu
 Hold fast to this knowing
 Find the sacred rocks and streams
 Understand the ancient rituals of this time
 Let go of your childhood
 TaAAAAAAA
 Ngiiiiiiiiiii
 Let go of the sacred reddening
 For it is good, for it is good
 Let your mind move to your whare tangata
 The sacred house of all human kind
 Be kind to your self
 Mirimiri
 Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee
 Your hands your feet
 Mirimiri
 Your first house
 That is you
 Each marama
 Maaaaa
 Raaaaa
 Maaaaaaa
 Maaaaa
 Rama
 Rama
 For this is the great mate
 Maaaaaa
 Teeeeeeeeee
 Aaaaaa
 Eeeeeee
 The enlightened one by the moon
 The peaceful one by the moon
 She is Hine te Iwalwa
 Your mother's teacher of all acts
 Your mother's teacher of all motion
 She will guide you
 Each month, sing and dance
 For the coming, the letting go
 Puhi
 UUUUUUU
 EEEEEEEE



Figure 3.12

Ma ma
 Maaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
 Maaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa
 Ma ma Ma ma Ma ma
 She wears her ma ro
 To cover that which is inside of her
 This is her time
 She is naked to the sun, the sea,
 She wears her feathers, tree barks, and dog hair
 In the colds, the snow
 She designs to keep her family warm
 She makes mats for them to lie upon
 She designs, wears, and fashions
 She is MaMa

For Ngaromoana the veils are imbued with the idea of ownership of oneself, body and soul, of getting and being married to oneself. She made them not to get married to a male, but certainly to celebrate her own womanhood and to be married to “who I think I am. And then, of course my daughters and the whole sisterhood celebration thing started to come into play.”¹³⁶ Hidden inside the veils are ‘surprises’, secrets which only reveal themselves when lifting up or peeling away the different layers: little pictures, such as photographs of women, sometimes her aunties or grandmother and often nude photographs of herself. They are about taking pride and belief in the body, taking ownership of it, and being comfortable with it.¹³⁷

Quite like the *Veils Series* and carrying just as many layers of female mystery, *Handbags* (Figs. 3.13, 3.14), as another component of *Naked and...*, also addresses aspects of womanhood and femininity. Again Ngaromoana has written poems to go with the works and has also included photographs of herself. What stories could a handbag tell, what can it reveal about the woman who owns it, about the times and circumstances she lives in, about what is meaningful and precious to her.

Ngaromoana used old handbags from second hand shops, pasted layers of paper onto the leather which she then painted, using white, black and gold colours. The simple shapes express movement and flux, they advance, expand and withdraw again, nothing is constant or permanent. Reminiscent of Miro paintings or Calder

¹³⁶ Personal communication, March 2009.

¹³⁷ Ngaromoana, who is herself very comfortable with her body, also addresses health issues. She is very concerned that Maori and Pacific women in particular often struggle with obesity while magazine images of women today mostly promote a skinny, and often artificially or surgically enhanced stereotypical body type. There is much anxiety surrounding the body and unhealthy eating patterns are quite common, particularly in young women.

mobiles while there is no stability, there is balance. Adopting these pre-loved and later abandoned handbags from the 'discarded items pile', transforming them and claiming them for herself, Ngaromoana has given them a new purpose, a new life as well as a identity, just as she has done with other recycled items.



Purse your lips baby
We are going shopping for food, and shelter
This purse is full of loose change
Follow the signs where the pickings are good
The tools are in this purse
And its business baby
Lets shop till we drop

Figure 3.13



Are you sure you don't have any change
For this poor old artist
With her ancient songs and markings

Are you sure you don't have any change
For this poor old artist
Her exhibitions are shows
Of impending birth

Are you sure you don't have any change
For this poor old artist
Who's painted so long
Her arm's had it

Are you sure you don't have any change
For this poor old artist
For food and lodging

Are you sure you don't have any change
For this poor old artist
A mystic, dedicated to learning,
Divine, magic, and science

There is always change in safe places
Hearts, tins, caves, and brief cases
Rich is this artist
To sing and dance for you

Figure 3.14

A profane and simple plastic *Bucket* (Fig. 3.15) also caught Ngaromoana's attention. Like the handbags it was transformed into a piece of art and memorialized in a poem. As much an item of femininity as the veil, although much less mysterious and much more mundane, it underwent the same transformation as the handbags. So central is the role of a bucket in the lives of the women of this world, and so many hours do we spend carrying them from point A to B, filled with drinking water, cleaning water or all sorts of other matters! In this instance the artist has connected her bucket to the birth of a child, whose whenua is carried back to the village to be buried in the land. Ngaromoana closes the cycle. The story has been told.

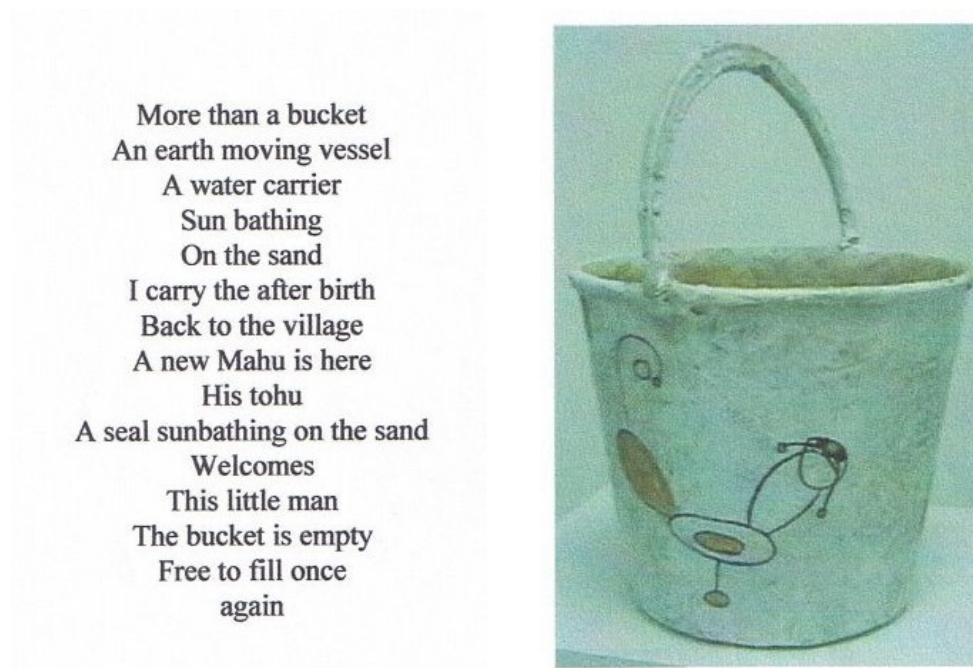


Figure 3.15

In discussing Ngaromoana's works on women I have emphasized that they include her own experiences and tell about her own physical, emotional or spiritual location at the time they are created. Her art confirms, acknowledges and acts upon the intimate connection between women and the land. In *Naked Sands* Ngaromoana drew the attention to the concept of mana whenua and exposed the abuse of her natural environment, trying to prevent more injuries to it. Throughout her career she addresses the situation of women and casts the light on mana wahine. An analysis of her *Wahine Atahua* paintings has revealed beautiful women, unable to unfold, due to societal and personal constrictions. Incapacitated and not in their own power they cannot contribute from a place of strength. Ngaromoana bares the wounds in her own body and psyche, and in doing so she exposes the wounds in the culture. Drawing on feminist writings and addressing female under and misrepresentation on an international scale, I have shown that these wounds are of global dimensions, and that the situation of Maori women and Maori women artists must also be seen in this context.

Unfortunately, as Estes aptly comments: women cannot make the culture more aware by saying "Change". But what we can change is our attitudes towards ourselves, thereby causing devaluing projections "to glance off."¹³⁸

[A woman] does this by taking back her body. By not forsaking the joy of her natural body, by not purchasing the popular illusion that happiness is only bestowed on those of a certain configuration or age, by not waiting or holding back to anything, and by taking back her real life, and living it full bore, all

¹³⁸ Estes, 1992, p. 204.

stops out. This dynamic self acceptance and self esteem are what begins to change attitudes in the culture.¹³⁹

Two decades later and again from a very personal point of identification Ngaromoana is doing just that. She reclaims lost territory, and she reclaims mana. With *Naked and...* she takes control: of her body, of aspects of her culture, of femininity, of femaleness in its different stages, of the land and the village, to which she returns her child's placenta. And, again, in doing so, she transcends the boundaries of village, of culture, even of the personal and of her own previous art. Positioning herself within the sisterhood of friends, stripping herself of all cultural identifiers and even blurring her facial features (Figure 3.10) – what remains is the image of *a* woman. By appropriating Leonardo's *Vitruvian Man*, she creates *the Vitruvian Woman* and assures her sisters: Thou art "TOI". THOU ART ART. The cycle has been closed. The story has been told.

¹³⁹ Estes, 1999, p. 204.

Conclusion

For the future, despite the depletion and abuse of natural resources, we must find hope in the wisdom of the past: the past as it is preserved by the present – such as the work of the weaver of fibres, the woman who cultivates, gathers, recycles...the woman who knows and loves Papatuanuku and celebrates the bounty of the earth, the woman who teaches, and strengthens. And endures, and endures.¹⁴⁰

This quote epitomizes Ngaromoana, her politics, her life, and her art. This thesis has focused upon the phases in Ngaromoana's life and how she has visually told these stories throughout her artistic practice. She is an *Indigenous Village Artist* – one who intertwines her genealogy, her commitment to the Opoutama village, her identity as a Maori belonging to the iwi of Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu, her identity as a woman, and of course, her identity as an artist. In exploring Ngaromoana's art, we have seen various series that support her notion of an indigenous village art, bringing together her whakapapa, her village and her representation of women.

I highlight once again these individual components, which make up the patterns in the tapestry of Ngaromoana's art. In addition, her very recent works will also be discussed. In doing so, that tapestry becomes visible in its entirety. These new paintings tell about an artist who has come into her own. Ngaromoana, has reached a stage that is, at least for the time being, unaffected by external factors. *Mahitian Queen I, II* (Figs. 4.4, 4.5) again are self-portraits, showing a woman living a close and untroubled relationship with the village and Papatuanuku. *Whaea* (Figs. 4.6 –

¹⁴⁰ Te Awekotuku, 1991, p.70.

4.8) display self-contained mature women, full of pride and dignity dressed in their cloaks. The *Grasskirt* paintings (Figs. 4.9 - 4.14) depict a young and happy Ngaromoana, wearing her culture with pleasure and joy. These works tell of a woman carrying her culture and of a culture that carries that woman. She uses huia feathers, moko kauae (chin tattoo), cloaks and the piupiu to represent culture. That culture is Maori.

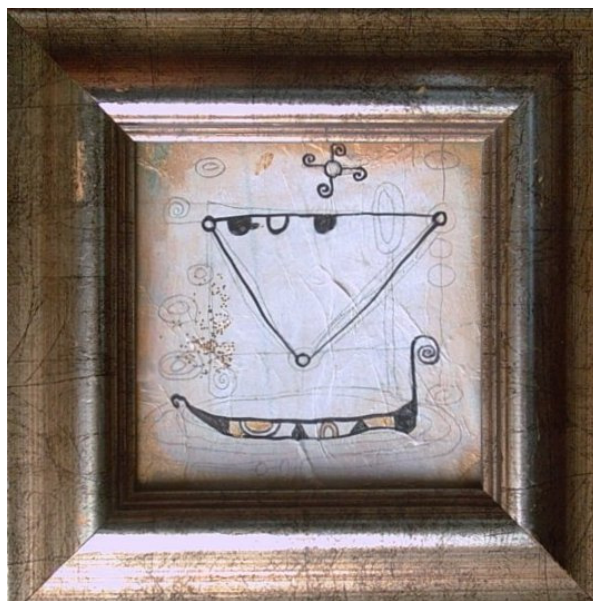


Figure 4.1 *Vikings of the South Seas*

Ngaromoana's chosen world is her village. Her indigeneity to Opoutama has been explored through her whakapapa. In discussing her ancestry, the Takitimu canoe, the tohunga nui Ruawharo, Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu, I have demonstrated that these ancestors are held in high esteem and still very much alive in the village. *Vikings of the South Seas*, 2008 (Fig.4.1) is one of a series of small paintings on the ancestral voyages, alluding to both, her Pacific and Danish forebears. Fine pencil circles denote the individual islands and the currents connecting them. Again we see

that the artist's work revolves around this village and its heritage, as well as the important spiritual concepts embedded in this environment. Ngaromoana is dedicated to keeping the home fires burning. Preserving and sharing the knowledge contained in the stories of old, she retells them in pictorial form. These stories as well as the concepts, upon which they are based, are relevant beyond the confines of the village and valuable to a wider public. Committed to both the past and the present, Ngaromoana is also involved in teaching and community development and, likewise, holds environmental and conservation issues close to her heart.

When a threat to that environment posed itself in the form of a proposed development, Ngaromoana responded with her *Naked Sands* project. Based on her commitment to protecting mana whenua, this project locates her work within the context of Maori political art. Only in a painting (Fig.4.2) did she stake a head to



Figure 4.2

mark her territory, and, like the chiefs of the past, sent out the warning that an advance would not be made easy. Ngaromoana also asserted her position with the *Occupation* and by reenacting the ancient ritual of *Ahi Kaa*. With the *Caravan* as a mobile historical document she intends to take these issues to other parts of the country. In doing so, her art practice and vision connect the local with the wider community, demonstrating her important contribution to New Zealand art. *Naked Sands* is a statement revealing Ngaromoana's strong engagement with environmental issues. *Whakapohane* as a part of *Naked Sands* specifically allows insights into the concept of mana wahine, which is as much a focus of her attention as mana whenua. There are allusions in this gesture to Hinenuitepo, the Great Goddess of the Night, who, having defeated Maui, will meet us all after death. Whakapohane is as much an insult as a warning. Attention is drawn to the fact that we are only brief visitors on this Earth, whose mana is paramount. The innate message is that we should be very careful and discriminate in our engagements with her.

Here, as in *Naked and...*, the artist uses her body to tell a story. She conveys a clear and very powerful message. Examining the close connection between mana whenua and mana wahine, this thesis has elaborated on these issues as well as the representation of women. I have argued that Ngaromoana's works on women are self-portraits that forge, at the same time, a link between herself, mana wahine Maori, and the status of women in general. With the *Naked and...* project Ngaromoana reclaims the image of the female body. She reclaims mana wahine.

She also re-contextualizes utensils as items of female identity (Fig. 4.3) and beauty. In this way she asserts her position within the framework of feminist art.



Figure 4.3 *Veil* (detail)

With her most recent works Ngaromoana has completed a cycle. While early in her career she conveyed images of women who were beautiful but somewhat incapacitated and damaged (Figs. 3.2 - 3.6), these new works have quite a different quality about them. They tell different stories. In these paintings (Figs. 4.4 - 4.15) Ngaromoana pulls various strands together, the individual patterns form a whole and her art (her life) emerges in its totality. Without doubt, being a woman and woman artist in today's society has caused Ngaromoana angst and heartache. Being a Maori woman in Aotearoa New Zealand has caused her great grief. Living in Opoutama, the village she loves and commits to, and seeing important features of

that village destroyed has caused her pain and misery. She remembers: "...battling and getting burnt, physically, socially and spiritually to the point of emptiness. You certainly don't ever want to go back there".¹⁴¹ And yet at the same time, being a woman, being Maori, being the village artist and being alive and living in this spectacular Opoutama world, and on this glorious planet have countered this trauma.

Mahitian Queen I (Fig. 4.4) depicts a regal, monumental female figure. Her body can be perceived as part of a landscape, one also containing and enveloping the



Figure 4.4 *Mahitian Queen I*

¹⁴¹ Personal communication, May 2009.

land. She seems to be giving birth to plants and flowers. Trees are growing on her body as if out of fertile grounds. Represented by wave patterns on her legs, the woman also holds the sea. A poutama pendant adorns her solar plexus while her left breast or heart chakra is aglow with golden light. Her head is adorned with huia feathers indicating blossoming, and sunglasses protect her eyes from the rays of the sun above. Due to the light golden brown sewing pattern, which can still be traced underneath through the white paint on top, this painting appears very soft in texture. White here, as well as in other paintings, represents the *Long White Cloud* of Aotearoa. There is only an outline of her upper limbs, arms, and hands. However, unlike the artist's earlier *Wahine Ataahua* paintings, *Mahitian Queen I* does not look damaged or mutilated but very much at ease and whole. Relaxed and calm she is self-contained, radiating an air of quiet completion. There is nothing she needs or wants *to do*, she just *is*.

Similar attributes are applicable to Figure 4.5.¹⁴² While *Mahitian Queen I* could remind us of a Henry Moore sculpture, *Mahitian Queen II* is a lovely, elongated female form with the elegance of a Modigliani work, but without its erotic charge. Stretched out on the beach half covered in sand, she belongs to the land and is a part of it, just like the birds or the sea creatures. Her free flowing hair answers to the waves of the sea, represented by a horizontal strip of light blue. Some shapes, perhaps a fish and a mango pare seem to be frolicking about. A few stars tell of Ranginui, the Sky Father. The sun, either just rising or setting on the horizon is

¹⁴² This painting is done on a sample of wallpaper glued on canvas.

casting a ray her way. Again, one of her breasts is painted golden and decorated with a heart shaped pendant. Her pubic area and thus her femaleness are emphasized, which alludes to the *whare tangata*. As in previous works, there is nothing titillating about this interpretation of the female nude, which like *Mahitian Queen I* has a Zen quality about it. Again, the woman just *is*, in her right place and in her own time. She belongs.



Figure 4.5 *Mahitian Queen II*

If we understand Ngaromoana's paintings of women as self-portraits, we must conclude that the artist has arrived at a more peaceful place than the one she inhabited in the late 1980s, when she painted *Wahine Ataahua*, or during the subdivision process in 2005/2006. The *Whaea* works of 2009 (Fig. 4.6 – 4.8) again confirm that healing has taken place. Painted on samples of wallpaper on canvas, they are small to medium in size and depict older, mature women, wrapped in cloaks, some of which have Maori designs, such as *niho taniwha* (tooth of the

dragon) and koiri (kowhaiwhai pattern) as well as poutama. These women appear strong, whole and dignified. While they often have no limbs they do seem intact and able, holding their power within. Figure 4.8 draws upon a Gustav Klimt painting as Ngaromoana liked the square hair, but again they lack any of the sexual connotations so central to his work. In their serene tranquility these stylized figures are reminiscent of Egyptian sculptures and murals or even sarcophagi. Expressing aspects of timelessness and eternity they can be seen as representing an idea or a spiritual concept of womanhood.



Figure 4.6

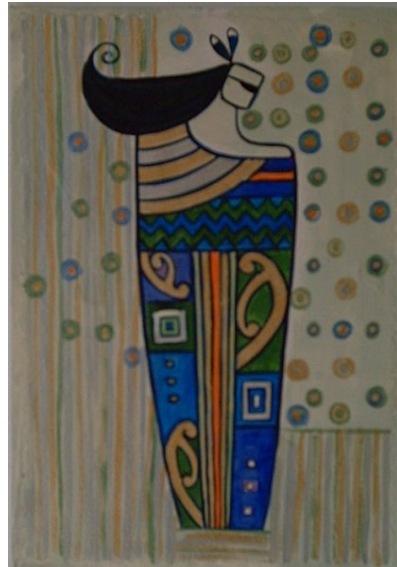


Figure 4.7

In the *Whaea* works, like in many of her previous paintings of women, Ngaromoana uses line sparingly, with economy but great strength and a very sure hand, conveying essence rather than individuality. This universality is confirmed in her use of iconography. Her philosophy is ‘enough is enough’. She says: “I love the

lines – they are sparing and it’s enough. I have to feel that when I start getting very busy with a painting and the lines and colours are just flying around. I think these are universal shapes. They also address issues of belonging to a bigger sisterhood.”¹⁴³

Some Maori feminists did not share the notion of a bigger sisterhood of women during the 1990s, when Ngaromoana painted *Wahine Ataahua*. Working within an academic environment, Smith and Taki, for instance, argued that implicit in the “sisterhood is global” slogan is the assumption that “we are on the same team by virtue of being female. What this conveniently overlooks, is the position of power and privilege that Pakeha women already have.”¹⁴⁴

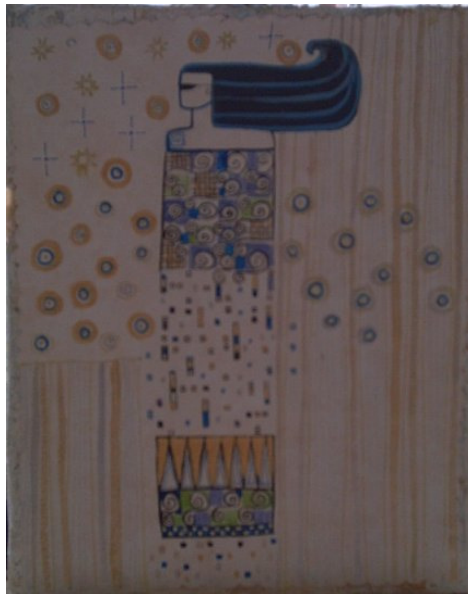


Figure 4.8

¹⁴³ Personal communication, March 2009.

¹⁴⁴ Cheryl W. Smith & N. Mereana Taki, “Hoihoi Wahine Pakeha”, in *Te Pua*, Volume 2, Number 1&2, 1992, p.38.

While some such privileges may be enjoyed by Pakeha women in New Zealand and are perhaps rightly challenged by Maori feminists, the question is: Can we afford *not* to think along the lines of sisterhood and *not* to be ‘on the same team’?

Ngaromoana’s approach is not only embracing and insightful but also timely and necessary; as Darcy Nicholas said: “We must develop a vision that enables us to survive into a future world. Together.”¹⁴⁵

The idea of envisioning a future world is embedded in her very playful series of *Grass Skirt Paintings* (2008) (Figs. 4.9 - 4.14), which are inspired by her small granddaughter Waipiata.¹⁴⁶ They radiate happiness and a carefree ‘joie de vivre’. Ngaromoana perceives her relationship with Waipiata as a completion of the soul: “where the last 50 years sit beside the 50 years to come”.



Figure 4.9

¹⁴⁵ Nicholas, 2003, unpaginated.

¹⁴⁶ Waipiata is named after the estuary at Opoutama.

The *Grasskirt* works compliment her poem *I love my Grasskirt*. In this series, which represents aspects of her granddaughter as well as herself, the artist reclaims another aspect of this Maori cultural icon. In the poem a different, later stage of womanhood is addressed. These paintings, however, reference the innocent aspect of Maori female identity, the very young girl. They are rather small and set in ornate gold frames, which Ngaromoana has begun to collect from second hand shops. Again she uses a limited palette of black and gold paint on a white background.



Figure 4.10



Figure 4.11

The works have sprinkles of gold glitter on them and some display the writing “I Love My Grass Skirt”. The supports are built up with textured tissue paper glued on board. The recycling and conservation aspect previously touched upon comes into

play. These paintings, too, convey essence rather than individuality, and while the lines are strong and sparing, the overall appearance is very light hearted. Due to the materials they are also very soft, very playful and symbolic. They show a young Ngaromoana in her piupiu, adorned with huia feathers, her sunglasses and a big smile. She explains:

Those little grass-skirts speak about the way I wear my culture. I suppose that people from outside NZ still see Maori in grass skirts or piupiu. I like the positiveness about it – not the degradation in terms of tourism. I think it's really cool to wear your grass skirt and strut your stuff and to give significance to the material, the flax, and what it takes to make a piupiu, and, of course to wear it, to wear it with joy.¹⁴⁷



Figure 4.12

In a series of larger *Grasskirt* paintings (2009) that very piupiu has evolved into a rather spectacular device, which completely counteracts and defies gravity. Her

¹⁴⁷ Personal communication, May 2009.

grass skirt appears to be taking Ngaromoana on a journey. Like a 'vehicle' that can miraculously change capacity, the piupiu is carrying her through her different adventures. In Figure 4.12 the artist can be seen interacting with *Moko*. This friendly dolphin, that has become a Mahia celebrity, has been permitting locals and visitors to frolic in the Opoutama sea with him for several summers now. Wearing sunglasses and huia feathers, her piupiu provides the buoyancy necessary to keep up with the dolphin.



Figure 4.13

Ngaromoana's grasskirt also gives her wings on a journey to the stars (Fig.4.13). Away from the cares of the world, she is happily floating in space; her moko kauae reinforces her cultural affiliations. In another, the *Grasskirt* spacecraft has 'landed' (Fig.4.14) and the artist admires a flower and a small garden or island with plants and trees. The dominant gold and white colours lend lightness and preciousness to these delicate works and some of the shapes are reminiscent of Miro. The image

Figure In.7 also belongs to this series. Here Ngaromoana and Waipiata are seen journeying through the skies together, exhibiting warmth and affection for each other.¹⁴⁸ Clearly, after the stressful event of the subdivision and the very demanding *Naked Sands* and *Naked and...* projects, Ngaromoana is enjoying a more peaceful and relaxed time.



Figure 4.14

We, as Ngaromoana, have come full circle. Fostered by her academic training she uses her artistic talents to visually tell stories that need to be told. Ngaromoana occupies a unique place as an indigenous village artist. This position draws upon an exceptional set of values, which require different criteria to adequately position her within the contemporary New Zealand art world. In exploring the notion of a village based art a holistic concept emerges, which encompasses issues of

¹⁴⁸ This particular painting can in essence be compared to the *Lovers* series by Marc Chagall, where he roams the heavens with his partner Bella.

conservation, sustainability and community development. Village art, as Ngaromoana practices it, is about participation, inclusion, social needs and self esteem. It provides a place where traditional and contemporary art can sit together. Only elitism is excluded. Ngaromoana engages with her environment, her culture, and her situation as a woman. Based on spiritually substantial theories and concepts embedded in Te Ao Maori (such as whakapapa, mana whenua, mana wahine, mauri, tapu, noa, poutama, and rongo mai wahine), her practice is all embracing, addressing not only the local, but also the global. She builds a bridge from Opoutama to the rest of the world. This indigenous village artist is ready.

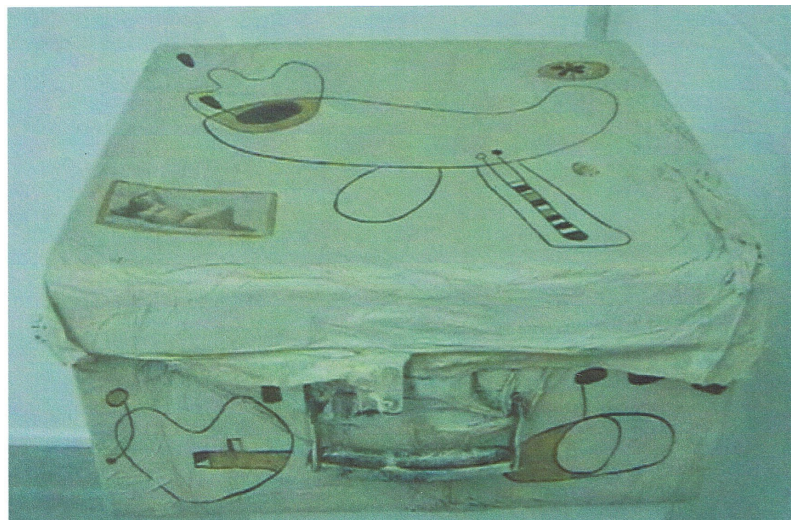


Figure 4.15

Ready and packed to go
Over deserts, savannah, oceans wide
Many winds, rides, and tide
Wherever it takes me
The mystery of life I go
Under the moon and over the snow
Resting under a shady tree
Apples, nuts, sweet water in streams
Following stars

Following my dreams
Off to Australia
To see the old one
Painting the sand
Dancing the earth
Singing the Ngi
The red Rock calls to me
Opoutama to Uluru
UUU
AAAA
UUUUU

Her *Suitcase* is packed.¹⁴⁹ When we open it, we will find paints and brushes, her piupiu, and many more stories to tell. She will paint them all. Rongomaiwahine: Listen To The Woman.

¹⁴⁹ The *Suitcase* (Fig.4.15) was included in the *Naked and...* project.

Wie die hohen Sterne kreisen,
ewig, voller Harmonie.

Wollen unsere Lebensweisen
unverbildet sein wie sie.

In dem Grossen, in dem Kleinen
will der Weltengott erscheinen.

Alle Schöpfung schwingt im Reigen.

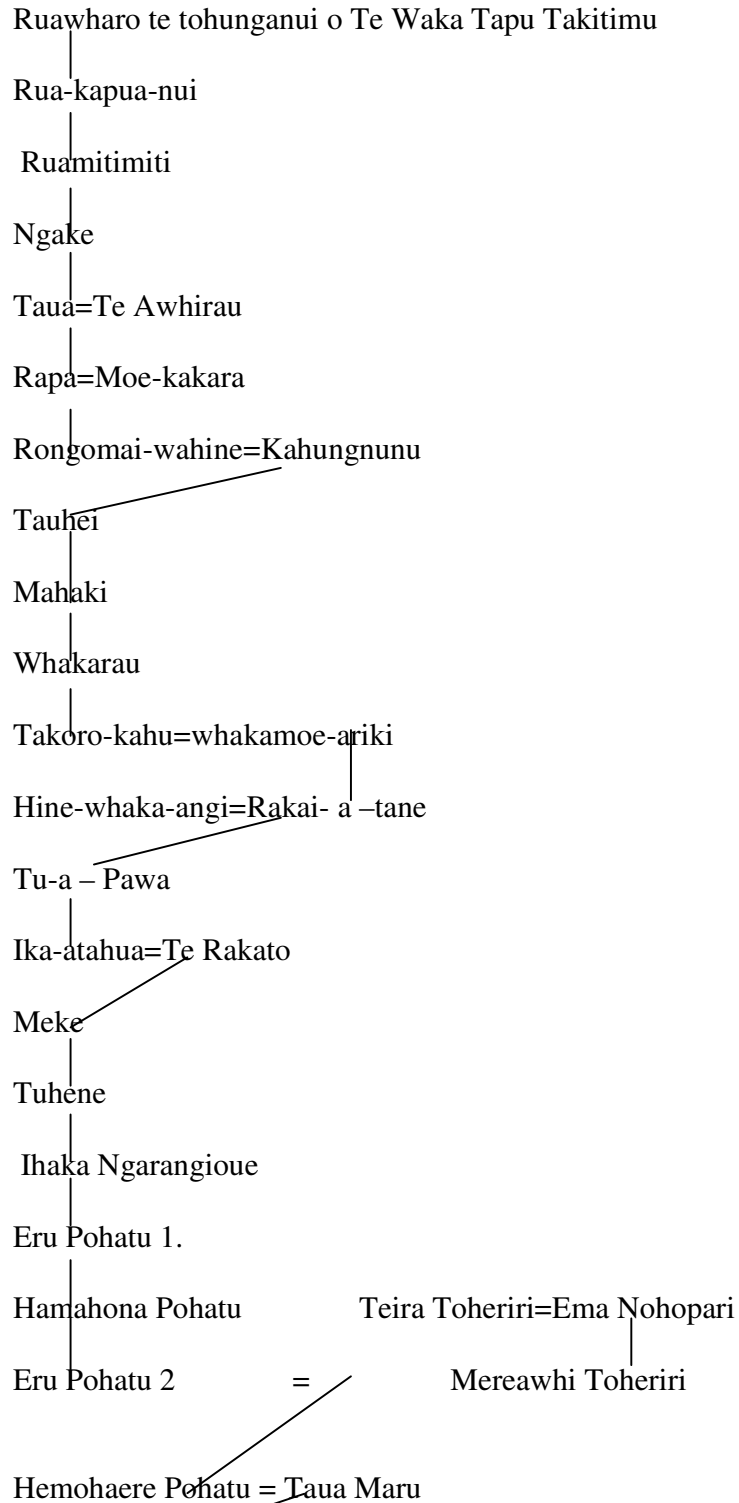
Freude heisst ihr Hohes Lied.

Nur der Mensch will sich nicht neigen,
jagt nach anderm Glück sich müd'.

Freunde sucht den Sinn der Dinge,
dass auch Freude Euch durchdringe.

German song, origin unknown

Ngaromoana's Whakapapa (courtesy of the artist)



Ema Nohopari Maru = Bob Nielsen

Mavis Nielsen = Joseph Tuakana Raureti

Ngaromeana Raureti = (1)Taiawa Harawira

Wharerau Raureti TeMahia Raureti

Waipiata Ropiha

Ngaromoana Raureti = (2)Mahea Tomoana

Raerena, Tiwai, Tiria, Vita, Taraipine Tomoana

Biographical Notes/Important Exhibitions

Ngaromoana was born in Wairoa on November 5th, 1957.

Early education and High School in Napier.

Between 1975 and 1980 part time studies in Wellington, Christchurch and Hamilton.

In 1979 she joined the Maori Peoples' Liberation Movement in Auckland, organizing marches to Waitangi to protest against the signing of the Treaty. She became a member of the Polynesian Peoples' Anti Nuclear Committee and the Women's Group Hine Tu Kaha. Her main contribution to the cause was in the form of graphics, T-shirt, flag and pamphlet design.

In 1980 she traveled Northland with the Kapa Haka group, Te Whai Huarahi, performing waiata and comedy.

In 1981 Ngaromoana participated in the Springbok Tour protests,

...was the Maori representative at the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, United Nations, Switzerland,

... gave birth to her first son, Wharerau, and continued her involvement with the Waitangi Action committee and Hine Tu Kaha.

In 1987 she moved back to Hastings in Hawkes Bay, where she worked as a visual artist for Black Katz, a women's music collective, working with women in need through multi media.

In 1989 Ngaromoana met Sandy Adsett who became an important mentor and teacher,

...was the Arts coordinator for the tribal exhibition *Kahungunu*.

...and showed her work in local exhibitions and the Sleeping Giant Gallery in Hastings.

In 1994 she joined the National Maori Visual Arts Committee as a member for Te Atinga and met Robyn Kahukiwa and other Maori women artists. She felt blessed to find herself surrounded by these creative and loving women

... and exhibited at Te Taumata Gallery in Auckland

In 1996 she took part in the Indigenous Visual Arts Conference in Rotorua,

...was the Director of Ako Resources, producing Maori education resources

...and shifted back to Opoutama.

In 1998 she showed works in an exhibition in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which was held in connection with the XVI. Commonwealth Games.

In 1999 Ngaromoana started the Maori Art course at Toi Houkura in Gisborne, where Sandy Adsett was her main tutor.

In 2000 she completed the Advanced Diploma at Toi Houkura, Gisborne,

...and received Jack Richards and Francis Margaret scholarships.

In 2001 she initiated and developed a hapu and iwi exhibition based at Ruawharo Marae, Mahia, which went on to become the annual *Gifted Sands* exhibition.

...she painted the mural on the veranda of Ruawharo Marae, which took her 3 months.

In 2002 she organized a marketing workshop for *Gifted Sands*,

...ran art practicals for young mothers for Te Hau Ora O Te Wheke a Nuku, a Rongomaiwahine iwi health service,

...painted the Hau Ora Health exhibit that went to Hannover Expo in Germany

...and took part in *Sisters* Exhibition at the Tandanya Arts Festival in Adelaide, Australia

In 2003 Ngaromoana painted the Opoutama School mural for the Home and School Committee

...and exhibited at Mataora Gallery in Parnell.

In 2004 she completed a Certificate in Business Studies at Te Wananga o Aotearoa.

In 2006 she enrolled in postgraduate studies in Maori Visual Arts at Massey University.

... and set up the *Naked Sands*... exhibition at Ruawharo Marae in Opoutama.

In 2007 she completed a BA in Maori Visual Arts.

In 2008 she was awarded a Masters of Maori Visual Arts Degree from Massey University

...and set up the *Naked and...* exhibition at Toimairangi Art School in Hastings.

In 2009 Ngaromoana took part in the *Kauwae Exhibition* at the Manakau Art Centre which later went to the Gisbourne Museum.

Glossary¹⁵⁰

ahi kaa	keeper of the home fire
arikinui	paramount chief
ariki tapairu	person of great mana and very high rank
ataahua	beautiful
atua	god, supernatural being, menstrual blood
hangi	earth oven
hapu	sub tribe, pregnant
harakeke	flax
hui	gathering
iwi	tribe, bone
iwitanga	tribalism
kai moana	seafood
kanga	corn
kapata kai moana	seafood cupboard
karanga	call, summon, welcome
karakia	prayer
kauae/kauwae	jaw
kete	basket
kei kei	pandanus, fibre plant
kina	sea-egg
koha	contribution
koiri	kowhaiwhai pattern
kokowai	red earth, pigment
Kotahitanga	Unity Movement
kotiro	young girl
koruru	gable figure
kowhaiwhai	painted ornamentation used on rafters, also on body

¹⁵⁰ I am using the singular in the translations.

kumara	sweet potato
kura	red, red earth, also school
kurawaka	Papatuanuku's pubic area
kuta	tall grass-like plant
kutai	mussel
mana	status, authority
mana wahine	status of woman
mana whenua	status of the land
mango pare	hammerhead shark
Maori	the indigenous population of New Zealand, normal
matakite	seer
mara	garden
marae	meeting house
mauri	life force
moko kauwae	chin tattoo
moteatea	chant
ngutu awa	river mouth, estuary
niho taniwaha	dragon tooth (traditional carving pattern)
pakeha	a person of European descent, foreign
papa kainga	home village
pare	lintel
parehuia	plume
paua	abalone
pingao	weaving grass
pikopiko	edible fern
piupiu	flax skirt
poutama	ascending pathway, stairway
powhiri	welcoming ceremony
puhi	a much courted unbetrothed young woman
pupu	mollusk
rangatira	chief

rangatiratanga	chiefly right of self determination
riwai	potato
rongoa	medicine
taiaha	long weapon/wooden spear
tai kaka	heart wood of a tree
tangata whenua	people of the land, the indigenous population
ta moko	tattoo
tangi	funeral ceremony
taonga	treasure, valued item
taonga tuku iho	treasure handed down from the past
tapu	restriction
taro	plant from the yam family
tauparapara	formal introduction, incantation
Te Ao Maori	the Maori world
Te Mahia-mai-tawhiti	the sound heard from a distance
Te Reo Maori	the Maori language
tohunga	specialist, skilled person
tohunga nui	high priest
tikanga,	customary code of law, custom and practice
toi	art, craft, knowledge (amongst other meanings)
turangawaewae	place to stand
uha	vessel, the female element
urupa	cemetery
uruwhenua/ uruuruwhenua	performing rites, including karakia or the placement of objects to acquire or preserve occupational rights to land
utu	reciprocity
wahine	woman
wahi tapu	significant site
waiata	song
waka	canoe
waka huia	treasure chest

whaea	mature woman, mother, teacher
whakapohane	deliberate exposure by a woman of her genitals
whakauruwhenua	see uruwhenua
whanau	extended family
whaikorero	official speech
whanaungatanga	family ties, interconnectedness
whakapapa	genealogy
whare ngaro	lost or extinct house
whare tangata	house of humankind
whare wananga	house for instruction in occult lore, also University
whenua	land, placenta

References Cited

- Adsett, Sandy and Whiting, Cliff. 1996. *Mataora, the Living Face*, Auckland, N.Z.: D. Bateman Ltd.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *The Location of Culture*, London; New York: Routledge.
- , 2000. "Interrogating identity: The Post Colonial Prerogative", in *Identity: a reader*, London. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications in association with The Open University, pp. 94-101.
- Bell, Leonard. 1992. *Colonial Constructs, European Images of Maori 1840-1914*, Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press.
- Bernstein, Hilda. 1978. *No. 46- Steve Biko*, London: International Defense and Aid Fund.
- Chadwick, Whitney. 2002. *Women, Art and Society*, London: Thames & Hudson.
- Duncan, Carol. 1993. *The Aesthetics of Power: Essays in the Critical Art History*, Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Estes, Clarissa P. 1992. *Women who run with the wolves*, London: Random House Group.
- French, Marilyn. 1992. *The War against Women*, New York: Summit Books.
- Harrington, Austin. 2004. *Art and Social Theory: sociological arguments in aesthetics*, Cambridge; Malden, Mass.: Polity Press.
- Ihimaera, Witi & Ellis, Ngarino, (Eds). 2002. *Te Ata, Maori Art from the East Coast*, Auckland, N.Z.: Reed.
- Ihimara, Witi. 1986. *The Matriarch*, Auckland, N.Z.: Heinemann.
- Isaacs, Jennifer. 1995. *Spirit Country*, St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.
- Kahukiwa, Robyn & Grace, Patricia. 2000. *Wahine Toa, Women of Maori Myth*, Auckland, N.Z.: Penguin Books.
- Kolig, E. & Mueckler, Hermann (Eds). 2002. *Politics of Indigeneity in the South Pacific: recent problems of identity in Oceania*, Münster; London: Lit. Piscawatay, N.J.: Distributed in North America by Transaction Publishers.

Langton, Marcia, 1993. *Well I Heard it on the Radio and I Saw it on the Television*, Sydney, Australian Film Commission.

Lambert, Thomas. 1998. *Story of Old Wairoa and the East Coast of New Zealand, or, past present and future: a record of over fifty years' progress*, Auckland, N.Z.: Reed.

Mikaere, Ani. 2003. *The Balance Destroyed: the consequences for Maori women of the colonization of Tikanga Maori*, Auckland, N.Z.: Published jointly by the International Research Institute for Māori and Indigenous Education and Ani Mikaere.

Millard, Arnold (Ed.). 1978. *Steve Biko – Black Consciousness in South Africa*, New York: Random House.

Mitchell, John Hikawera. 1972. *Takitimu*, Wellington: Reed.

Neich, Roger. 1994. *Painted Histories*, Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press

-----, 1996. "Wood Carving" in *Maori Art and Culture*, Auckland, N.Z.: D. Bateman, Ltd., pp.69-113.

Nochlin, Linda. 1989. *Women, Art, Power and other Essays*, London: Thames and Hudson.

-----, 1999. *Representing Women*, London: Thames & Hudson.

O'Regan, Hana. 2001. *Ko Tahu, Ko Au, Kai Tahu Tribal Identity*. Christchurch, N.Z.: Horomaka Publishing.

Pere, Rangimarie Turuki. 2003. *Te Wheke, A Celebration of Infinite Wisdom*, Gisborne, N.Z.: Ao Ako Global Learning New Zealand Ltd.

Pollock, Griselda and Parker, Rozsika. 1981. *Old Mistresses, Women, Art and Ideology*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Pollock, Griselda. 1988. *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and Histories of Art*, London, New York: Routledge.

Smith, Anthony D. 1995. "The Formation of National Identity" in Henry Harris (ed.) *Identity: Essays Based on Henry Spencer Lectures Given in the University of Oxford* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1995), pp.129-153.

Smith, Huana (Ed.). 2002. *Taiawhio, Conversations with Contemporary Maori Artists*, Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa Press.

----- . 2007. *Taiawhio II, Contemporary Maori Artists*, Wellington, N.Z.: Te Papa Press.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies*, London: Zed Books; Dunedin, N.Z. : University of Otago Press.

Smith, S. Percy. 1913. *Memoirs of the Polynesian Society, Volume III, The Lore of the Whare Wananga, Part I*. New Plymouth, N.Z.: Printed by Thomas Avery.

Te Awekotuku, Ngahua. 1991. *Mana Wahine Maori*, Auckland, N.Z.: New Women's Press.

Trinh, Thi Minh-Ha. 1989. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

Walker, Ranginui. 2004. *Ka Whawhai Tonu Matou - Struggle Without End*, Auckland, N.Z.: Penguin.

Whaanga, Mere. 2004. *A Carved Cloak for Tahu*, Auckland, N.Z.: Auckland University Press.

... 2004. 'Ngati Rongomaiwahine' in Ministry for Culture and Heritage, *Maori Peoples of New Zealand, Nga Iwi o Aotearoa*, (Auckland, David Bateman, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2006), pp.177-180.

Williams, Herbert William. 1992. *Dictionary of the Maori Language*, Wellington, N.Z.: GP Publications.

Woolf, Virginia. 1938. *Three Guineas*, London: Hogarth Press.

Unpublished Material

Diamond, Jo. 1998. *Takarangi, A Spiral Design on a Patchwork Quilt*.

Nicholas, Darcy. 2003. Keynote Address, *From Tribalism to Internationalism - Speech to the South Pacific Arts Forum*, Christchurch, 2003.

Stevenson, Karen. 1997. "The Role of Hollywood Designers in the Creation of Paradise" at *Featuring Paradise in Film*, Hawaii, 1997.

Catalogues:

Ihimaera, Witi. 1997. Emily Karaka, *Waharoa O Ngai Tai*. Manukau City, N.Z. : Fisher Gallery.

Matchitt, Para, Adsett, Sandy, Walker, Tim. c1993. *Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake*, Wellington. Museum of New Zealand, Council for Maori and South Pacific Arts (N.Z.).

Toi Maori Aotearoa. c2004. *Whenua, Born of the Land*, Wellington.

Davis, Frank. 1976. *Contemporary Maori Art*. Waikato Art Museum.

Magazines, Journals and Newspapers

Klekottka, Anna.1995. "Gender Balance? Equality? – The Gaps Are Huge", in *Golden Bay Community News*, October.

Lauter, Estella. 1990. "Re-enfranchising Art", in *Hypathia*, Volume 5. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press.

Mane-Wheoki , Jonathan. 1995. "Robyn Kahukiwa My Ancestors Are With Me Always," *Art New Zealand*, Winter 1975, Art Magazine Press Ltd.

Norman, Waerete. 1992. "He Aha Te Mea Nui," in *Te Pua*, Volume 1, Number 1, Auckland, N.Z.: University of Auckland. Puawaitanga.

Pere, Rangimarie Turuki. 2005. "Finding Meeting Points" in *Consult*, Publication of Hawke's Bay District Health Board, March.

Smith, Cheryl W.& Taki, N.Mereana. 1992. "Hoihoi Wahine Pakeha", in *Te Pua*, Volume 2, Number 1&2. Auckland, N.Z.: University of Auckland. Puawaitanga.

Wairoa Star. 2006. March 21.

Documentary Feature

The Last Resort Errol Wright & Abi King-Jones, 2007.

Videos

Patu Merata Mita, 1983
Kohia Ko Taikaka Anake Te Waka Toi, 1991

Electronic Resources

James Herod. 2001. *Indigeneity*,
http://site.www.umb.edu/faculty/salzman_g/Strate/GetFre/21.htm Accessed May
2008.